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BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS.

CHIEFLY A TRANSLATION

OF THE

MANUEL D'HERMÉNEUTIQUE BIBLIQUE, PAR J. E. CELLÉRIER, PROFESSEUR DE THÉOLOGIE EXÉGÉTIQUE À L'ACADÉMIE DE GENÈVE.

BY

CHARLES ELLIOTT, D.D.,

AND

REV. WILLIAM JUSTIN HARSHA.

De Deo homo dixit, et quidem inspiratus a Deo, sed tamen homo.—ST. AUGUSTINE. (Tract. I. in Joann. Evang.)

NEW YORK:
ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH & COMPANY,
900 BROADWAY, COR. 20th STREET.

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ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH & COMPANY.

NEW YORK:

EDWARD O. JENKINS,
Printer and Stereotyper,
20 North William St.

ROBERT RUTTER,
Binder,
116 and 118 East 14th Street.

PREFACE.

THE following treatise is principally a translation of the "Manuel d'Hermeneutique" of the late M. Cellérier, Professor in the Academy of Geneva, Switzerland. Of that work, an able hermeneut, the late Principal Fairbairn, of Glasgow, Scotland, says, that "however objectionable in respect to the principles it occasionally enunciates, it is one of the most systematic and complete in form."* The translator of Dr. A. Immer's "Hermeneutics of the New Testament," remarks: "Cellérier, Manuel d'Hermeneutique Biblique" . . . . is "very valuable, as well for the principles set forth, as for the abundant examples of the application of the principles."†

The objectional principles to which Dr. Fairbairn alludes, have been eliminated, and others, especially on the subject of inspiration, have been substituted by the senior translator and editor, who alone is responsible for all omissions, changes, and additions. Though he assumes this responsibility, he wishes, at the same time, the book to appear as the joint production of himself and of his friend and former pupil, the Rev. W. J. Harsha, without whose assistance he could not have found time to finish it.

Consent to the translation and to the changes made has been obtained from the family of Professor Cellérier by my friend, the Rev. Dr. Godet, Professor of Theology, Neuchatel, Switzerland. In the letter containing the permission, Dr.

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* Preface to the "Hermeneutical Manual," by Patrick Fairbairn, D.D. Philadelphia: Smith, English & Co., 1859.

† Dr. Immer's "Hermeneutics of the New Testament," page 159, note. Andover: Warren F. Draper, 1877.

Godet says: "La famille Cellérier consent de tout son cœur à l'usage que vous desirez faire de l'ouvrage de venerable Professeur Cellérier. Elle demande simplement que vous ayez la bonté d'indiquer au lecteur le rapport entre votre travail et celui de M. Cellérier."

Dr. G., in the same letter, suggests the propriety of indicating, by certain marks, the matter of Prof. Cellérier and that of the translators, which suggestion has not been literally followed, inasmuch as it would interrupt the continuity of the work. It has been deemed best to give the numbers of the sections that have been changed or omitted. The numbers have been taken from Prof. Cellérier's work, and are the following:

(1). Sections partly omitted, viz., 21, 25, 30, 31, 54, 57, 60, 71, 79, 81, 90, 91, 93, 96, 104, 116, 119, 122, 155, 170, 179.

(2). Sections entirely omitted, viz, 26, 38, 65, 74, 153, 163, 165, 166, 168, 169, 176, 184, 185, 187, 188, and from 189 to 210 inclusive.

(3). Sections modified, viz, 20, 170, 175, 182, 183.

(4). Sections to which additions have been made, viz, 1, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 27, 28, 39, 43, 126.

(5). Sections supplied by the senior translator, the numbers of which correspond to those of the translation, viz, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149.

Several sections are occasionally thrown into one.

These changes, though not in accordance with the letter of Dr. Godet's suggestions, are yet in harmony with their spirit, and are, in the opinion of the translators, within the limits prescribed by Prof. Cellérier's family. In its character as a scientific treatise, the work remains as it came from the hands of its author.

It is published under the impression that a convenient Manual on the subject of Hermeneutics is needed for the use of ministers of the Gospel, and of Students of Theology. The arrangement is as nearly complete as it can be made; and for the purposes of a text-book, it is perhaps superior to anything of the kind that has appeared.

It will be observed that the book treats of *general*, not *special* Hermeneutics. There are works, such as Dr. Davidson's "Sacred Hermeneutics," Dr. Fairbairn's "Hermeneutical Manual," and Dr. Immer's "Hermeneutics of the New Testament," which discuss particular points and special questions more fully than that of Prof. Cellérier does; but the latter covers better than any of them the whole field of Hermeneutical Science.

If this work shall promote in any degree the study and right understanding of God's Holy Word, the object of the translators and editors will be accomplished.

To the glory of Him, who "hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son" (Heb. i. 2), it is dedicated.

CHARLES ELLIOTT.

CHICAGO, *March*, 1879.

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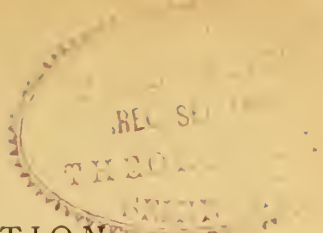

INTRODUCTION.

SECTION FIRST.

NATURE OF HERMENEUTICS.

§ 1. RELATION OF HERMENEUTICS TO EXEGETICAL THEOLOGY.

THE object of Exegetical Theology is the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures; and it attains this object by four distinct, yet coherent and successive operations.

(*a*). The Christian divine, called to expound and interpret the Word of God, ought first to explain the history, the circumstances, and the form of the Bible. This is the special object of Introduction, or *Isagogics*.

(*b*). He must, in the second place, determine, as nearly as possible, the true and original text; and endeavor to disengage it from the numerous variations with which eighteen centuries of citations and transcriptions have encumbered it. This is the object of the *Criticism of the Text*.

(*c*). Before attempting the explanation of the phrases and ideas of the Bible, a third task, and the most important of all, is necessary. The theologian should understand the principles, according to which they must be explained. The exposition of these principles receives the name of *Hermeneutics*.

(*d*). After these three successive processes have been finished, the Biblical interpreter enters upon his work.

He reads, he analyzes, he develops, he comments on the Holy Word, line after line. He no longer constructs a science: he practices an art — *Exegetics:* he accomplishes a task—*Exegesis.*

Hermeneutics comes from the Greek, ἡ ἑρμηνευτικὴ sub. τέχνη. Ἑρμηνευτικὴ is derived from the verb ἑρμηνευειν, to interpret, to put into words, to give utterance to, to explain, to make clear.

Hermeneut, Greek, ἑρμηνευτής, is an interpreter, or one who instructs others in Hermeneutics. *Hermeneutical* (hermeneutical standpoint, hermeneutical laws), Greek ἑρμηνευτικός, signifies belonging to, or suited to interpretation, or explanation. Ἑρμηνεία is the expression of the thoughts by means of words; explanation, interpretation.

Hermeneutics is properly the art of τὸ ἑρμηνεύειν, or of ἡ ἑρμηνεία; but the word is now generally used to indicate the theory of that art, or the doctrine of what is to be observed in τὸ ἑρμηνεύειν.

Exegesis, Greek ἐξήγησις, derived from ἐξηγεῖσθαι, *to lead, to go first, to show the way, to point out, to expound, to narrate, to describe*, is used in the sense of *exposition, explanation. Exegete*, Greek Ἐξηγητής, is one skilled in Exegesis. At Athens ἐξηγηταὶ were those who had to observe signs and portents, and give instruction in the sacred rites. *Exegetical*, Greek ἐξηγητικός, signifies pertaining to exegesis. (See Doedes' Manual of Hermeneutics. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1867, pp. 1–4).

[NOTE. *Isagogics* is derived from the Greek word εἰσαγωκικός, pertaining to εισαγωγη (a leading in, or introduction), which comes from the verb εἰσάγειν, *to lead in, to introduce.* We use the corresponding term, *Introduction*, derived from the Latin, *Introductio*, derived from *introduco, to bring or lead in, or into.*]

§ 2. DEFINITION OF HERMENEUTICS AND DISTINCTIONS.

Hermeneutics, as already intimated, is the science which teaches the principles of interpretation. Biblical Hermeneutics, in particular, is the science which determines the principles of the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures.

This definition is vague and indefinite. We must, in order to make ourselves understood, add two classes of distinctions, by separating, in the first place, Hermeneutics proper from all that has been falsely classed under its name; and by indicating, in the next place, the methodical and scientific elements of Hermeneutics properly so called. To the latter we restrict ourselves in the present treatise.

We first distinguish Hermeneutics from all that has been falsely classed under its name.

Some have confounded it with *Isagogics*. This mistake was made before any one had produced a plain statement of the different elements of Exegetical Theology. Those theologians, who had no idea of the position which method and logic should occupy in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, were disposed to give the name of Hermeneutics to those works, in which facts were everything, and in which methods had no place. From these facts they deduced rules, or canons, but no principles. Certain preconceived doctrinal views, the authority of Confessions of Faith, and traditions, excluded all independent examination, and consequently all Hermeneutics proper.

The Roman Catholic divines, with some exceptions, have made the same mistake, and from a similar cause. The authority of the Church does not allow among them any field for the science of interpretation. Their inter-

pretations are given officially, and there is nothing left for them but to study the facts, to admit those which confirm the doctrines of their Church, and to conceal or attack those which are opposed to those doctrines.

But those who recognize the right and duty of examination make of Hermeneutics a special science very different from Isagogics.

Still further, we distinguish Hermeneutics from Exegesis.

Exegesis is the practice of an art: Hermeneutics is the science that governs that art. The practice of an art, it is true, has need of some rules, which have been classed under the name of Exegetics. There is no science in these rules: they are a simple indication of precautions and methods. Exegetics may, strictly speaking, be considered as an appendage to Hermeneutics; but it has neither the importance, nor the utility, nor the unity, nor the depth of the latter, and ought to be regarded as the result, or end aimed at.

§ 3. DISTINCTIONS CONTINUED.

We distinguish, in the second place, that which, in the domain of Hermeneutics, is methodical, scientific, and, at the same time, essential, from that which is not.

To that part which is methodical and scientific, we give the name of *Formal Hermeneutics;* that which is not, we denominate *Material Hermeneutics.**

* *Formal* (Prof. Cellerier uses the term "Real") is that which lies within the jurisdiction of Logic, and which Logic guarantees; *Material* is that which lies without the domain of Logic, and for which Logic is not responsible. All that is *formal* is true as consciously necessitated by the laws of thought; all that is *material* is true, not as necessitated by the laws of thought, but as legitimated by the conditions and probabilities discoverable in the objects about which we chance to think.—*Sir William Hamilton's Logic*, pp. 539, 541.

Under *Material Hermeneutics*, we class those attempts which have been made in treatises upon Hermeneutics to formulate, in an absolute manner, certain general dogmatic, historic, and æsthetic results of the Holy Scriptures. These attempts, more ambitious than happy, seek now by analysis, now by synthesis, now by both combined; now in general, now in particular and in detail; now by *a priori* principles, now by canons deduced from facts; to determine the nature and value of the Bible histories, of its miracles, of its doctrines, of its poetry, and of its discourses.

Material Hermeneutics, instead of forming a science, consists chiefly of scattered attempts, in which authors do not define sufficiently the object of Hermeneutics and state its results.

Here we dismiss the subject of *Material Hermeneutics*, because it does not belong to the science—at least to the elementary and methodical science necessary to every theologian intrusted with the duty of expounding the Scriptures.

Formal Hermeneutics seeks methodically, not for results, but for the rules and principles by means of which one may find the results. It searches for, points out, and expounds the methods by means of which the interpreter may find in the Bible the truth which it contains.

But here arise new distinctions, marked with the confusion that has reigned in the science. Some have distinguished *General* from *Special Hermeneutics*.

General Hermeneutics is that which embraces the entire science, which lays the foundations of the true method of interpretation, and which, setting out from the very nature of the act of interpreting, establishes the general principles of all interpretation of whatever kind, and proceeds thence to the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures.

Special Hermeneutics investigates the rules applicable to the different characters of the particular books of the Sacred Writings, as historical, or poetical, or didactic. It is a practical, and, we might say, an empirical science, whereas the former is methodical and philosophical. It seeks for rules and solutions; the former, for principles and methods. It is nearly allied to Material Hermeneutics; the former, to Formal Hermeneutics.

We think that General Hermeneutics is more important than Special to Theology, truth, and faith. It is of the former alone that we will treat, seeking, at the same time, to illustrate it constantly, by examples and analyses of particulars, which shall occupy the place, and, to a certain extent, partake of the character, of Special Hermeneutics.

§ 4. IMPORTANCE OF HERMENEUTICS.

Perhaps no branch of theological science exerts an influence so great and fruitful as Formal-General Hermeneutics, which furnishes to the theologian his methods of interpretation. It decides, to a certain degree, the systems of dogmatics, instruction in religion, the faith of the people, and often the peace of the Church.

One may see, by the place which it occupies in Exegetical Theology, the high position which it holds. It aspires to nothing less than to be the key of the Sacred Books, unlocking all the science and learning founded upon them. Without it, Dogmatics must be uncertain; and consequently our doctrinal views must rest upon an unstable foundation.

It goes still further. It applies logic to the study of the sacred volume. It demands as auxiliaries, besides learning and criticism, reason and method, philosophy, pyschology, and all the means which God has given to

men to discover the truth. It is in that way unceasingly occupied in bringing into harmony reason and revelation, in illustrating the one by the other, and in making manifest between them that accord which is one of the grand proofs of the divine perfection and heavenly origin of our faith. Well directed, it enables us to contemplate the Holy Scriptures in all their native purity, in all their divine depth, in their intimate relations to the perfections of God on the one hand, and to the heart of man on the other. In other words, it exhibits them in all their beauty, at once human and divine. It thus reanimates the faith, and founds it solidly upon truth and reason. It prevents, as far as possible, false interpretations and false systems, which are so frequently causes of unbelief.

If ever the Church of Christ be united in the bond of peace by love; if she ever arrive at the unity of the faith; or, rather, if she ever approach this ideal goal—impossible perhaps to be attained here below—it will be by an interpretation of the Holy Scriptures at once devout, experimental, intelligent, and clear; which is, in short, by a true and complete science of Hermeneutics.

SECTION SECOND.

HISTORY OF HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLES.

§ 5. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.—THE FIRST PERIOD.—FROM THE TIME OF THE APOSTLES UNTIL THE TIME OF ORIGEN.—FIRST AND SECOND CENTURIES.

HERMENEUTICS is essentially a science of principles. Before entering upon the analysis, which shall enable us to determine the principles upon which the science is to be constructed, we will indicate those upon which theologians have, in different ages, attempted to found it. We are not in a condition, at this late date, to appreciate these attempts in detail, nevertheless it will not be without utility to pass them in review. This historical picture will enable us to recognize the ground upon which the edifice of the science should be erected—the ground which it is absolutely necessary to clear from rubbish before it can be built upon.

For the purpose of observing order, in this rapid sketch, we will divide it into eras, although they may be vague and merely approximative.

The first era comprehends the first two centuries. It commences with the Christian Church and ends before Origen.

During this era Hermeneutics did not exist, and could not exist. The Church was too much occupied with practice, too little instructed by meditation and experience, too much harassed, at times, by persecutions, and absorbed in polemics, to think of discovering for itself

the scientific principles of interpretation. The Church of this era was, moreover, so near to the time of the preaching of the Apostles and of the publication of their writings, that these were sufficiently perspicuous and fully explained by the oral traditions so carefully sought for at that time. One has need of principles and methods to assure himself of the sense of a book only when that sense is not evident. An interpreter is necessary only for that which is obscure.

§ 6. SECOND PERIOD. — FATHERS OF THE CHURCH (FROM ORIGEN TO THE MIDDLE AGES, *i. e.*, THE THIRD, FOURTH, AND FIFTH CENTURIES).

During this period a scientific spirit sprang up and developed itself; but the science of Hermeneutics had yet no existence. Certain principles of interpretation are discerned in the writings of the Fathers; but these principles are not formulated.

The more prominent are the following:

(*a*). *The divinity of the Bible.* The Bible is divine. Therefore, it can contain nothing unworthy of God—in other words, nothing false, absurd, or immoral. This fundamental principle is admitted by every true Christian as the basis of his Hermeneutics; but it has, nevertheless, need of being illustrated and limited. It has the logical inconvenience of being *a priori*, and of prescribing, previous to examination, what it ought to deduce as the result of inquiry.

(*b*). *Multiple sense of the Bible.* This bold principle had its origin in the logic and imagination of the East, especially of the School of Alexandria. The Palestinian Jews brought out of Chaldea the remains of the ancient Oriental-Greek philosophy, whose conflict with their own religion gave rise to the system of allegorizing among

them. Moreover, the Platonic philosophy, so prevalent in Egypt, considerably affected the interpretation adopted by the Alexandrine Jews. It led them comparatively to disregard the literal sense, and to seek after a hidden one which would coincide with their philosophical ideas. This, however, can not be truly regarded as the cause of such a method of exposition. The origin of allegorizing is to be traced to a pious feeling seeking to introduce into the Scriptures more than sound judgment sanctions, or the Bible itself approves.

Finding in the New Testament an appearance of support, the early Church Fathers, with a true piety united to an exalted imagination, accepted the allegorical method of interpretation with enthusiasm. They distinguished and arranged the multiple sense as something firmly established. Confounding the uses which may be made of a passage of Scripture with its meaning, they adopted a variety of senses, which they classed under the following categories, viz.: *grammatical*, *moral*, *anagogical* or *mystical*, and *allegorical*. The meaning of these senses becomes clear from the well-known couplet:

> "Litera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria,
> Moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia."

The principle of a multiple sense is opposed, as we shall see in the sequel, to logic and to facts. It is dangerous in that it introduces into the Holy Scriptures an element of confusion and of error, and arbitrary human opinions into our belief. It has little respect for the Scriptures, inasmuch as it delivers them over to the imagination and caprice of the interpreter, that is, to the fancies and whims, which they ought to control.

(*c*). *Mystic force of the Holy Scriptures.* Some attributed to the Bible, not only to its ideas, but also to the book itself, an inherent and secret virtue, which had the

power of strengthening, edifying, and consoling those who read it, although they might incorrectly understand the sense, or be entirely mistaken about it. This was a pious, but dangerous superstition. It deified the words, rendered the true sense superfluous, truth unworthy of research, and set aside the divine thought. As a hermeneutical principle, it is not worthy of being debated.

This grave error, however, conceals a truth, which we will do well to recognize. It is that the believer, who meditates upon the Bible, with pious dispositions, is edified by the very efforts which he makes to comprehend it. These efforts place him in the presence of God, reanimate whatever pious and elevated sentiments he may possess, recall to him what he already knows of the Bible, the lessons which he has heard deduced from it, the holy emotions which it has excited in his heart; and in this way, should he even be mistaken in regard to the sense which he assigns to its sacred pages, he leaves his meditations with increased piety, and consequently a better Christian. In such a case his errors of interpretation can never be very serious. He interprets the Bible by the Bible and by its general analogy. There is, therefore, in this case no mystic force, but an influence of the Bible very happy and very real.

These three principles, which we have now explained, were universally admitted in this era. The immense influence of Origen's writings introduced them into general use.

But a century after him other principles began to be added to them. This was due to a man, whose imagination, sensibility, eloquence, and piety have seldom been equalled in the Church. St. Augustine introduced, not into the science of Hermeneutics (since that did not yet exist), but into the practice of interpretation, three new elements, viz.: *The qualifications necessary to the inter-*

preter, the analogy of faith, and the authority of tradition. These three principles gained ascendency only by slow degrees, and consequently we must refer to other eras to notice their development.

§ 7. THIRD PERIOD.—THE MIDDLE AGES.

This era extends from the sixth to the fifteenth century. During this period Hermeneutics still remained without the shape of a science; but all the principles of the preceding era were put in practice. They were, however, subject to tradition, and employed in its service. This is the period of the reign of authority.

The principle of authority, taken in an absolute sense, is in opposition to logic and all philosophy; for it supposes all progress impossible, and, consequently, all examination useless. Nevertheless, even in the middle ages, progress, or at least a condition of change, existed; and it was very necessary to discover some means by which to render it legitimate. The system of pontifical authority developed itself; and how was this development to be reconciled with the ancient authority of the early traditions? To effect the reconciliation, they assumed an inspiration constantly renewed in the Popes and the Councils; and consequently a tradition ever increasing, and maintained without losing anything of its authority —an authority infallible and, at the same time, progressive. This was a means, if not logical, at least ingenious, of reconciling contrary principles, which the Church wished equally to preserve, while it left the respect due to the Scriptures to exist only in appearance.

What became of the Holy Bible under the dominion of such a system? It became a book of no value, perverted at will to suit the passions and interests of the chiefs of the corrupted Church. It was a treasure un-

known, forgotten, buried. The revelation of Jesus Christ was replaced by a new revelation, which presumptuously assumed its name; by a revelation without miracles, and without proofs, which had the promises neither of this life, nor of that which is to come.

Nevertheless, even in this monstrous error, there was a principle of truth.

We must distinguish between the two elements of the system: the authority of tradition, and the continued inspiration of the leaders of the Church.

This last element was only an invention to subserve the interests of scheming men. It contains no principle of Hermeneutics, of logic, or of truth.

It is not so with the principle of authority. After it has been deprived of its despotic and absolute character, and has assumed that of respect for experience and antiquity, it has a right, as well as the others, to a place among the aids, which the interpreter ought not to neglect. In this sense, to have recourse to the authority of the ancients, is to consult men who have examined the Bible before us in a different and often more favorable position. It is to enrich ourselves with the knowledge of all times and of all places.

It is necessary to observe that all the principles passed in review have a philosophic and true element. They become dangerous only when isolated from others and invested with an absolute value.

§ 8. FOURTH PERIOD.—THE REFORMATION.

We must include in this era those distinguished exegetes who preceded a little the time of the Reformation. Influenced by the revival of learning and the intellectual movement of the age, they had much in common with the spirit of the new era; and though

they did not yet employ precisely the principles of interpretation, which were soon to prevail, they nevertheless presented them, and thus contributed to bring them into use.

The Reformation was destined to exercise, and did exercise, an immense influence upon Hermeneutics.

This influence had a twofold character, general and intellectual, special and biblical.

The Reformation was a revolt and a victory of the human intelligence, and of the spirit of examination. It was impossible that Hermeneutics should not derive from this event more life, more independence, and more originality. It is only in this era, indeed, that the true history of Hermeneutics commences—the history of its free and spontaneous development.

It is necessary, however, to observe that the very nature of the examination which produced the Reformation, that of the struggle which succeeded it, and that of the tendencies and religious wants which arose from it, continue to give to hermeneutical researches a character much more intellectual than æsthetic and subjective. Hermeneutics was often too dry and dialectic. It forgot, for a long time, the lively, emotional, and poetical character so strongly impressed upon the Bible, or made at least very little account of it. It remained, almost until the present day, without appreciating the extent of the influence which the noble and prolific emotional and æsthetic elements ought to exert upon Biblical interpretation.

On the other hand, the Reformation was made in the name of the Bible and directed to it the attention, the respect, and the faith of the Church. It was a necessary consequence, therefore, that this great event should increase the use and importance of Biblical Hermeneutics, and, in the course of time, bring it into accord with the

sacred text. It immediately impaired the authority of those principles which had diminished that of the Holy Scriptures. It established and developed principles entirely opposed to those which had hitherto obtained. The authority of tradition was annihilated, and the multiple senses were diminished. If any typical and allegorical interpretations were still maintained, it was because they had, or appeared to have, their foundation in the Bible itself. Some new principles, supported by the authority of the Bible, replaced the old ones; or at least so far that the latter were neglected and placed in a second rank. These new principles were developed by the aid of the Reformation, so successfully as to prevail over all others. They are the following:

(*a*). *Theopneusty*, or inspiration taken in its absolute sense. The successors of the reformers, rather than the reformers themselves, understood it in a much stricter sense than the first centuries of the Church had used it. The doctrine of inspiration is the basis of Protestantism, but only so far as it is supported by the Bible, and illustrated and limited by Biblical facts. The principle of a literal theopneusty was generally admitted in theory by the great exegetes of the Reformation, but often contradicted by them in practice.

But "within the pale of the Protestant Church there soon emerged a difference of opinion, which has subsisted with growing divergence ever since. The one principle of the singular and supreme authority of Scripture found its natural expression in the views of Calvin and his followers in the Reformed Churches, with respect to inspiration. They approved themselves heirs to the faith of Augustine and the early Church in the complete infallibility of the Bible; while as to the manner in which the doctrine was held, and the explanation of it was to be given, their definite and systematic views

of all divine truth led them to give it a more dogmatic shape and formal expression than it had received before. In the writings of Calvin himself there is the fullest recognition of the human element in the sacred volume, along with an unequivocal assertion of that divine control over the instrumentality employed in composing it, which secures it against error. But there is also a wise abstinence from speculative views as to the theory of inspiration, and no presumptuous attempts in the way of defining the manner in which the supernatural result of an infallible text was brought about.

"The same abstinence from hypothesis in explaining the doctrine was not observed by some of Calvin's followers in the subsequent discussions that arose concerning it; and in their teaching we observe a tendency to make the divine element in inspiration supersede the human, and to reduce the inspired man, when under the influence of the Spirit, to the level of an unconscious and unintelligent instrument. The language of the Formula Consensus Helvetica in 1675, and of some theologians about the same period and afterwards, who maintained the cause of Scripture inspiration, can hardly be accepted in consistency with the fact of the complete freedom and individuality, in the exercise of their proper powers, of the inspired writers. And yet it is difficult to believe that the purely mechanical hypothesis of an entire suspension of will and intellect and consciousness in the prophet, so much akin to the Montanist heresy in the early Church, was ever seriously entertained by many of those divines whose language might seem consequentially to lead to it. On the contrary, in the case of some at least, there is distinct evidence that, whatever their theory might logically imply, they truly held by the idea of the conscious individuality and intelligent

co-operation of the inspired man under the power of God's Spirit."*

(*b*). *The analogy of faith*, which regulates the interpretation of each passage in conformity with the whole tenor of revealed truth. This principle, according as it is explained and applied, is a fruitful source of error, or of truth. It is very much like reposing on a treacherous wheel, which is ready to run either way. Nevertheless it merits all confidence, so long as we take for the rule of faith the uniform teaching of Scripture. But if, on the contrary, we take the faith of the Church or official doctrinal symbols for the rule of faith, and apply it in theory, or in fact, to the interpretation of the Scriptures, we are guilty of the fallacies of *petitio principii* and of reasoning in a circle. This would be the death of all examination, and of all Hermeneutics, and of all exegesis. Undisguised Popery could not be worse.

(*c*). *The comparative study of the Scriptures.* The Reformation, while rendering Hermeneutics more intellectual, more logical, and more Biblical, enabled interpreters to derive more benefit, than their predecessors had done, from the Bible itself, by the method of comparing its different portions. In this way originated, among the Protestant theologians, the great hermeneutical use of *parallel passages* and of *the context*. We shall speak at length, in the sequel, of these two aids to interpretation, and will, therefore, not detain ourselves longer here. Suffice it to remark that this new tendency, to compare Scripture with Scripture, did more than anything else to prepare a conscientious and logical exegesis, and began the work of placing Hermeneutics upon its true foundation. To this era the science

* Bannerman on Inspiration. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1865. pp. 135, 136.

really owes its birth. Nevertheless it was only in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that it appeared in a more distinct manner upon the horizon of theology, and that it was reduced to a system, though still rude and heterogeneous.

Since the Reformation and the Council of Trent, the Roman Catholic Church, the slave of authority, has no Hermeneutics worthy of the name: we must, therefore, seek for the principles of the science in the Protestant Churches.

§ 9. FIFTH PERIOD.—SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

The impulse given by the Reformation bore its fruits. New exegetical methods were adopted; and new principles, due to the special tendencies of some men, or of some sects, were added to the old hermeneutical principles of perpetual validity.

The Socinians demanded that the Scriptures should be interpreted *in a rational sense.* This principle has a legitimate foundation; but it must be received with proper limitations. Reason—the instrument of truth, a gift of God of great value, although feeble and fallible—reason has the right, and it is under obligation, to examine the evidences of Scripture, to accept it, and to interpret it. This is not all: it ought, besides, to derive nourishment from the Bible. While meditating upon it, it should derive from it lessons for practice, assimilate its teachings to its own substance, instruct, develop, and regulate itself by the devout and constant study of its sacred pages. Between these two sources of light—the Bible and reason—there should always be a conscientious and prudent action and reaction. The rights of reason are those of a friend called in to counsel with one, and not those of a sovereign, who despotically chooses,

rejects, disposes, and, if need be, effaces, or perverts everything in the Holy Word that displeases him, or surpasses his understanding. To admit a positive revelation and to reject things positively revealed is a great inconsistency.

The Socinians wished to subject revelation to reason: the Quakers, at the other extreme, made the same mistake in wishing to subject the written Word to the "*Inner Word*," that is, to an individual revelation. Here we still find, as always, a mingling of the false with the true.

Without doubt, the mind nourished by holy thoughts, aided by God, using its noblest faculties, can, as it were, by a spontaneous bound, raise itself to a sufficient height, to grasp, rapidly and without the aid of analysis, certain truths of sentiment and of conscience. In hermeneutical science it is necessary to recognize this, which some have too often forgotten. According to them man would seem to be made up entirely of intelligence and reason.

But if this intuition of sentiment has its rights, it has nevertheless less right than reason to exercise authority over the Holy Scriptures. It can not aspire to this office without subjecting them to the caprice of the imagination and the follies of mysticism.

The principle of the Quakers corresponds so exactly to that of the Socinians, that there is only a difference in the nature of the faculties elevated to a superiority over Scripture. But this difference produced, in the two sects, consequences totally opposite. In reality the error of the mystical sect was more dangerous to man, to society, to faith, than was the error of the philosophical sect, at least in theory. However grave the errors of reason may have been, those of the imagination are still more deplorable.

To this era pertains another principle, which is the product neither of the Reformation, nor of the century, but of the eccentric tendencies of an individual. If this man formed a sect, it was the result of his individual influence. It was also the consequence and the natural chastisement of the fault committed by the reformed theologians, in preserving in their Hermeneutics so many of the capricious allegories of Origen and of Augustine. Cocceius, a Hollander, undertook, in his Hermeneutics, to pull down all the barriers that still controlled the imagination of interpreters, to give full liberty to their audacity, and, if need be, to their extravagance. Allegories and double senses were not sufficient for him: he freed them from all rules and from all limits. He declared legitimate all the senses which it is possible to give to Scripture; which practically amounts to declaring true and divine all the vagaries of the most fanciful interpreters.

§ 10. SIXTH PERIOD. — REACTIONS AND STRUGGLES DURING THE FIRST PART OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

The intellectual activity, the independence, the increasing boldness of religious systems, the incomplete, illogical, scholastic, or too purely intellectual character of the usual hermeneutical methods caused men to desire and frequently to attempt changes. The first half, or rather the first two-thirds of the eighteenth century witnessed new efforts to constitute the science of interpretation. But these efforts, made in contrary directions by the opposite schools, introduced a state of struggle rather than of decided progress. They furnished to the advancing science the materials which it had too much neglected; but still these materials were not arranged

scientifically. They formed a confused collection of contrary elements, from which we are now able to derive advantage in the way of selection. But being, during this era, in a state of mutual antagonism, no one ever thought of attempting to combine them. Nevertheless these materials, like all the principles which we have passed in review, were in part sound and useful, and in part of an opposite character. In respect to them, as in respect to everything else, it was necessary to examine, to weigh, to select, and to reject.

In this era we must distinguish three schools of very different principles, viz: The Logical School, the Pietistic School, and the Naturalistic School.

(*a*). *The Logical School*, the successor of the Arminians and of Grotius, was especially represented by two distinguished men, Le Clerc and J. A. Turretini, men of different mental characteristics, both Genevese; but the former was adopted by Holland. Tired of Cocceianism and of imaginary senses, this School adopted the principle that the Holy Scriptures ought to be explained like other books, by the aid of logic and analysis. It combated successfully the double, mystic, allegorical, and anagogical senses. It broke the despotism of the analogy of faith, and made Cocceianism succumb beneath its blows. It thus enabled theology to make a great advance toward a sound and true Hermeneutics.

Nevertheless it was at fault in neglecting too much an essential element. Too much preoccupied with the logical succession of ideas, it paid too little regard to their æsthetic development. The warmth, the sentiment, the emotion of the sacred writers, the appreciation of which forms a key necessary to the understanding of some of their writings, continued to be too much neglected, and consequently the problem of interpretation was not yet solved.

(*b*). *The Pictistic School.* The key, which we have just mentioned as too much neglected, was to a certain degree employed by the School of Spener, a worthy representative of which was the venerable Francke. They demanded two things of the interpreter of the Holy Scriptures, both of which are of great importance in the accomplishment of his task. The first, is sufficient learning; and the second, feelings in harmony with those of the writer, whom he wished to understand and explain. This was the first time, perhaps, in exegesis that any one proclaimed clearly the evident necessity of sharing in the emotions of an author, in order to reproduce them. It supposes the obligation of studying him emotionally, and of taking into consideration something else than pure ideas and their logical connection.

This School has been accused of mysticism; and it may not be entirely free from the charge. "Spener agreed with the mystics in this, that the dead letter avails nothing." But he opposed quite as decidedly the pre-eminence assigned to the Spirit without Scripture. Thus he said, in opposition to the notions of the Quakers: "Our feelings are not the norm of truth, but divine truth is the norm of our feelings. This rule of truth exists in the Divine Word *apart from ourselves.*"*

(*c*). *The Naturalistic School.* Naturalism, as pertaining to Hermeneutics, was a dangerous reaction, called forth by the abuses of the preceding century. The naturalists, or disciples of a purely natural religion, should be distinguished from the rationalists. The rationalist, properly so called, mutilates revelation, subjects it to the sovereign sway of reason, and sees in it only a providential, though a divine work; nevertheless

* Hagenbach's History of Doctrines. New York: Sheldon & Company. 1868. Vol. II., p. 246.

he loves it, or thinks that he loves it, and in a certain sense admits it. Those who are called naturalists in Germany have gone farther; they have shown themselves the enemies of the Holy Scriptures and of their teaching; they have disguised their contents, denied their value, and attacked them with hatred. The German naturalists of the eighteenth century were distinguished from the French deists only by a more scientific character; and from the English deists only by their theological pretensions. This naturalistic school did not develop itself fully until the second part of this century, although it commenced much earlier; and at the point of view which now occupies us, it ought to be noticed in connection with the views of the English deists, who made their appearance in the literary world before the naturalists. This infidel school has doubtless no right to be placed among those that employed hermeneutical methods, since to hate and deny is not to interpret. If we mention it in this connection, it is only because of the influence which the Hermeneutics of a past age exercised upon it; and because of the influence which it, in its turn, exercised upon the new hermeneutical science. Naturalism was, as we have said, a dangerous reaction; but it was nevertheless a reaction provoked by real abuses. Extreme views of inspiration, double sense, types, allegorical and mystical interpretations, examination determined by an arbitrary theological despotism in aid of the principles of the analogy of faith, of the inner word, of the revelation by the Holy Spirit of the true sense to the regenerate only, of the incapacity of the natural man to understand what is in the Bible and to recognize its divine character—these and such extreme views in theology had a tendency to repel far from the faith men who joined a reflective head to a cold and wickedly-disposed heart. The rage of in-

fidelity was terrible. It opened, both in the faith of the Church, and particularly in the German theology, a huge wound, which has not yet been healed. We must not, however, forget the good effects produced by this violent treatment of the science. We may indicate three different and intimately connected results. (*a*). It overthrew forever, at least in Germany, a certain number of errors in criticism, which had been confidently admitted up to that time, or at least it caused a more thorough examination of them, a modification of theories, and a search for more logical foundations. (*b*). It brought theologians to feel the necessity of strengthening religion, which had undergone such a violent attack, and of constructing more solidly the edifice of theology. (*c*). It led the way to and introduced the revival of hermeneutical studies, together with the wise combination of their different elements.

§ 11. SEVENTH PERIOD.—THE SCIENTIFIC ERA.

LATTER PART OF THE EIGHTEENTH AND BEGINNING OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURIES.

From this time we must seek chiefly in Germany for activity in the department of Hermeneutics.

England, during this period, rested in traditional routines, and France troubled herself very little about Hermeneutics. The Roman Catholic countries, out of Germany, shunned examination and were afraid of science. Belgium* published, under the name of Hermeneutics, works in which their authors seriously repelled the accusation of disobeying the Church in admitting the motion of the earth, and in denying the power of sorcerers. The United States, it is true, followed

* Janssens, 1818–1828.

Germany very closely; but they devoted themselves more to the labors of erudition and exegesis than to the investigation of principles and the philosophy of methods. Holland is always laborious and scholarly, but its science and language remain almost unknown to the rest of Europe.

We have, therefore, to investigate the development of Hermeneutics in Germany during the last half, or rather during the last third of the eighteenth century.

Setting out from this epoch, the science of Hermeneutics is represented by two great, opposite schools—*the Grammatical and the Historical.*

The founder of the School of Grammatical Hermeneutics was Ernesti, who based sound interpretation upon the philological study of the text, conducted in a conscientious, profound, and learned manner.

This method assumed a great respect for the text: it bound itself to the doctrine of inspiration, which made the very words of the text the legitimate source of authentic interpretation and of religious truth. The grammatical school was, therefore, essentially supernaturalistic. The founder of it and his disciples were, generally speaking, conscientious and pious theologians. But this method was evidently insufficient, not only in the means which it employed, as we shall see, but also in its object. In fact, it was able to attain only to a pure and simple interpretation of the text, which is not always enough for its exposition.

The Historical School, on the contrary, occupied itself principally, and too much, with exposition. Its founder was Semler, who, although personally worthy of esteem, and though of a religious and sincere character, was the real father of German rationalism. The fundamental principle of this school was the exposition of the Holy Scriptures, by the facts, the usages, and prejudices of

the times. This principle, true within certain limits and as a simple auxiliary of the science, becomes dangerous and improper, when employed exclusively. Connected, from that time, almost necessarily, with the idea that the Scriptures are fallible human productions, containing error, it led directly to rationalism. This school bore its fruits. It filled Germany with a crowd of theologians, without piety, without faith, and without life, with now and then original thinkers and keen critics, distinguished only by the rashness and fickleness of their theories, and by the superficial and vain levity of the hypotheses which they advanced with jealous rivalry.

To sum up in few words, the grammatical school was judicious, methodical, enlightened; but it was insufficient; to complete it other methods and other principles were necessary. The historical school would have been useful if it had been inspired by a spirit of sound criticism and of pious prudence, and, in the exercise of this spirit, been contented with the modest character of an auxiliary, instead of aspiring to supremacy. But it had a very different ambition. It was in reality less a cause than an effect. It was an accident, a result of the movement of the naturalistic reaction of which we have just spoken. We can affirm, without rashness, that it developed itself under the influence of sentiments slightly Christian, and of dispositions slightly philosophic. Its first thought was hostile to the Holy Scriptures. From effect it became cause, and exerted a powerful influence upon the rationalistic movement, which was the curse of Hermeneutics during the latter part of the last century. It had no respect for the divine authority of the Bible, and this barrier having been removed, the science was agitated like a stormy sea lashing on every hand this ancient monument of the faith. The Bible, mutilated by a great variety of hypotheses, and under the efforts

of a multitude of interpreters, was sometimes viewed as a collection of enigmas, of which it was the glory of men of talent to give some new solution; sometimes as a canvas, on which aspirants after fame attempted to try their powers and to write their names; sometimes as rude material, on which distinguished intellects should exercise themselves to polish and fashion it after their image. The great mass of scholars thought no more of searching for moral and dogmatic instruction in the Holy Scriptures, and recognized only, in appearance, their right to impart it. In the midst of such a commotion of minds what could Hermeneutics become?

We may distinguish, in the development of rationalism, three principal hermeneutical phases, in connection with the Historical school, but applying to the Bible very different processes of interpretation.

(*a*). The old, ridiculous, stiff rationalism represented by Paulus, explained all the miracles by natural causes, and, in so doing, tortured the words and phrases of the Bible until it imposed a sense upon them suitable to its aims.

(*b*). Logical rationalism, represented by Wegscheider, laid down the principle that the Bible has no authority, and that it contains less truth than error. However, when once delivered from its authority, and having no more interest to pervert it, this division of rationalism interpreted the Bible, in general, logically and impartially, although without depth, and consequently without intelligence.

(*c*). Pietistic rationalism, represented by De Wette, assigned great value to faith, but placed its foundation elsewhere than in the Bible: in the necessities of the heart, for example, or in the work of Christ, or in the history of Christianity and of its efficacy; but not in the Holy Scriptures. These, in its view, are a venerable and

providential, but a human and imperfect work. Accordingly it interprets them with remarkable science and sincerity, blended sometimes with admiration, sometimes with aspersion and disdain.

In these phases which we have indicated by their prominent traits and noted advocates were found many mixed shades of less intense colors.

These strange movements of the historical school reacted in a deplorable manner upon the grammatical study of the Holy Scriptures. This study was not abandoned, but it was rarely conducted in a severe and conscientious manner. Instead of exercising authority over historical study, it was made subject to it. Often it did not seem to aspire to a faithful interpretation regulated by the principles of a sound Hermeneutics, but to a paradoxical exposition, according to the taste of the day, and consequently false and forced. This is what was then called exegesis, and what has, for a long time, drawn down upon that name a grave and unjust disfavor.

In the midst of this confusion in hermeneutical science and of the subversion of the faith, certain pious men and certain elevated minds became frightened at the results, and desired to save from ruin the efficacy of the Bible and the respect which is due to it. *Storr* employed himself in the defence of its dogmatic authority, but he made some concessions, which were, in his opinion, required by sound criticism and facts. He also admitted the principle of accommodation in the quotation of Old Testament passages by Christ and His apostles. "*Kant* introduced the system of moral interpretation, according to which preachers and schoolmasters ought to explain Scripture, without regard to its original historical meaning, in such a manner as is likely to prove useful to the moral condition of the people, and also to put such useful

matter into passages which do not contain it. The historical part of Scripture, which, according to Kant, contributes nothing to make men better, is purely indifferent, and may be disposed of as we please.

"The moral amendment of mankind is the proper object of the entire religion of reason, and therefore the religion of reason contains the supreme principle of all Scriptural exegesis.

"This method of interpretation Kant applies, in all its fruitfulness of result, to the gospel history and the doctrines of the New Testament, by setting forth the personified idea of the good principle."*

§ 12. EIGHTH PERIOD.—PRESENT ERA.

In a state of things such as that which we have just described, Hermeneutics agitated by dogmatic warmth, by imaginary hypotheses, by methods inconsiderately adopted and abandoned, could not take a logical and durable form. Nevertheless the very errors of the science contributed to its progress, for agitation is always, in the end, more useful to a cause than apathy. This era, which was full of aberrations and constructed nothing of solid worth, was nevertheless eminently scientific. It made experiments, gained victories, established truths, and collected materials, by which the present era can profit. The present era has not been characterized, thus far, by labors of the first order, or by any remarkable school, or by a decided movement. We can, nevertheless, observe in it two favorable symptoms.

In the first place, attention has been directed to Her-

* Hagenbach's Hist. of Doctrines, Vol. ii., p. 468. New York: Sheldon & Co., 1868. Davidson on Sacred Hermeneutics, p. 194.

meneutics, and men feel, at least vaguely, the need at last of constituting the science. They set themselves more seriously to the work—if not of raising the edifice of the science, at least of collecting the materials and of clearing the site. Moreover, instead of clinging to a single principle, they draw from all sources, and seem desirous of taking from each school whatever it possesses of real excellence. It is true that in consequence of this very tendency, attempts have been made to restore ancient errors, which seem to have been forever dissipated.

Let us attempt to sketch, with a little more precision, the present condition of the science.

Both the Grammatical School and the Historical School still exist, but they are less rigid and less exclusive. They no longer correspond exactly to supernaturalism and to rationalism, which sometimes seemed to come near to each other under the powerful influence of Schleiermacher, and tend, not to blend indiscriminately, but to unite in a high Christian philosophy. This is a circumstance happy in this respect, that it has revived religious sentiment and piety among divines; but it is incapable of laying a solid foundation for the popular faith, and has a tendency, moreover, to leave the Holy Scriptures too much in the shade, and to forget their value and their rights.

The grammatical school has become much more profound in philology: it accomplishes its task with more exactness and intelligence; in particular, it no longer tolerates a bold and reckless exegesis.

The enfeebled historical school seeks aid more than formerly from philological knowledge, and devotes itself less to hypotheses.

In general, all exegetes agree that the two methods should not be separated the one from the other, and

that when separated they are insufficient. This is a great advance.

There is a step in advance greater still. Men begin to recognize, moreover, that even united these schools are equally insufficient, and that the interpreter has need of other resources. In particular, it is required of him that he should possess dispositions in harmony with those of the authors whose writings he interprets. This last point is decisive: it enlarges and rectifies the science.

Hermeneutics, as a science, is not yet fully developed; but practical Hermeneutics, or Exegesis, has made immense progress. It has become conscientious, judicious, methodical, active, and learned. The forced and partial exegesis of forty years ago has passed away, so also has the erudite, diffuse, cold, and useless exegesis of the commentators of a still earlier date. Now they seek to understand, to feel, and to cause others to feel. The art has far outstripped the science; and again, as often, instead of creating the art, the science will be obliged to receive aid from the success of the former in discovering and in reducing to system the rules, which it is its province to impose upon the art.

Until now, as we have already stated, the science, properly so called, has consisted entirely of attempts. If we examine its progress during the last forty years, we will find little original labor and nothing complete. Nowhere do we discover an intelligence adequate to the range and limits of Hermeneutics, or a plan which sufficiently and completely develops the science. Very few works have been written with the object of solving its problems. Certain pamphlets and certain articles in journals have advanced some new ideas, and have often restored ideas which have been for a long time forgotten.

Some authors deserve particular mention, not as hav-

ing constituted the science, but as having placed in the light some of its neglected features, and as having given to it some useful and practical directions.

Lücke, in a book, the work of his youth, which contains many striking and original things, has proclaimed the importance of taking into account the moral character of the interpreter; but this book, in the judgment of the author himself, is only an imperfect sketch.

Germar has developed, in several works, what he calls panharmonic Hermeneutics. The fundamental principle of his theory is of little value and really introduces no new element into the science. In reality it is limited to the task of establishing, with a great display of brilliant elucidation and sprightly diction, that interpretation ought to be directed by logic and good sense. But, if the originality of the object and of the discovery of this principle is only in appearance, the originality of its deductions is as real as fruitful. While attacking old hermeneutical methods and analyzing, with some profundity, the direction of the science and the intellectual labor of the interpreter, Germar said many things that were new, philosophic, of striking truth, and of continual application. Moreover, the numerous examples, the multiplied elucidations, the ingenious developments with which he enriched and completely filled his work, have caused many petty routines and narrow ideas to disappear. In particular, Germar has demonstrated so clearly the absurdity of the exclusive pretensions of the Grammatical and Historical Hermeneutical Schools to explain, without assistance, the Holy Scriptures, that the question has ever since been regarded as decided.

If the Hermeneutics of Schleiermacher had issued from his hands complete and finished, it would have been of great value, and the inventive genius of that extraordinary man would, perhaps, have given to this sci-

ence a decisive impulse. But he was not able either to publish, or even to commit to writing, the work alluded to. Lücke, whose intelligent perseverance collected and put together some posthumous leaves, some marginal notes, some fragments of a course of study, succeeded, with aid drawn from the note-books of students, in producing an able and faithful sketch of the teaching of his master. This sketch is, without doubt, a great and new service rendered to the progress of Hermeneutics; for though short and incomplete, it is full of original views and prolific ideas. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that it is still far from developing and elucidating the whole science.

Klausen, a Dane, published a treatise on Hermeneutics, chiefly historical, which was translated into German, in 1841. We have borrowed from him some details for that portion of this work which treats of grammatical Hermeneutics.

In 1843 and 1844 Wilke published, in two volumes, a treatise on Hermeneutics, much more prominent for the richness of its grammatical developments than for the methodical appearance of its plan, which was really confused and incomplete.

In the same year Samuel Davidson, LL.D., published a work on Sacred Hermeneutics, developed and applied; including a history of Biblical interpretation from the earliest of the Fathers to the Reformation.

In 1859, Patrick Fairbairn, D.D., published a Hermeneutical Manual, or Introduction to the Exegetical Study of the Scriptures of the New Testament, the principal aim of which is to apply hermeneutical principles to particular cases.

In 1862, J. J. Doedes, D.D., Professor of Theology in the University of Utrecht, published a Manual of Hermeneutics for the Writings of the New Testament.

In 1877, the Andover Press issued a work on the Hermeneutics of the New Testament, by Dr. A. Immer, Professor of Theology in the University of Berne.

In the main the science of Hermeneutics is progressing. On the side of its real progress, we should, it is true, notice here and there some retrograde steps; but these are ordinarily but partial errors, less grave than at their origin, and very much overbalanced by the generally recognized truths with which the science has, in its advance, been enriched.

Olshausen revived the principles of Origen and the double sense of prophecy; but he restricted their application to the Old Testament. The German Pietists have renewed the principle of the Quakers, but with less tenacity and infallible assurance. Some seem inclined to revive Cocceianism; and some have returned to the view of Spener concerning the inability of the natural man to understand the meaning of the Bible. But, in reality, all, in their practice, usually avoid, by happy inconsistencies, the logical consequence of their errors.

In the movement of the present period, one thing is evident: thoughtful Christian theologians are anxious to develop and advance the science of Biblical Hermeneutics. They will succeed, we hope, if their efforts shall not be too much embarrassed by the progress of different schools hostile to the authority of the Holy Scriptures.

Before we enter upon the discussion of our subject, it is necessary to elucidate a preliminary question.

SECTION THIRD.

THE UNITY OF THE SENSE OF SCRIPTURE.

§ 13. STATE OF THE QUESTION.

PREVIOUS to an analysis of the elements of Hermeneutics, we must be certain that it can exist as a science. This is denied by some divines, who have pretended, and who, at the present day, pretend that Scripture has many senses, that each passage can be understood in very different ways, all equally conformed to the divine thought. If it is possible for it to have a great number of true senses, no one of them can be sufficient, satisfactory, or certain. They exceed the sphere of logic and the conditions of science. Hermeneutics has no longer a significant result and is unworthy of our attention. We may at once disregard all method and abandon the interpretation of the Scriptures to the instincts of each one, or to his individual inspiration.

Thus arrested in our progress by an assertion, which would be strange, if it were not so ancient and so well known, we must, first of all, devote some space to the examination of it. We shall attempt to examine it first *a priori*, or according to the nature of things; then *a posteriori*, or according to the facts.

§ 14. EXAMINATION A PRIORI.

In consequence of human conventionality, certain words express certain ideas. Outside of this conventionality they express nothing and are nothing. They

attain their object and possess reality only as an acknowledged means of communication among men. Remove this conventionality and mutual agreement, and words serve no purpose, or else they serve to deceive. Moreover, all conventionality, or all agreement of this kind, even silent and understood, supposes that the words have a sense clear, incontested, and consequently unique. Beyond this sense, there is no intelligent intercourse. Accordingly words have ever received from their origin a unique and precise sense. This sense is often extended, obscured, and then multiplied, in consequence of the irregularities of language, of new ideas due to civilization, and of the need of metaphors inherent in the human mind. But the ambiguity resulting from these new significations given to primitive words is an inconvenience: it owes its existence to accident and not to intention; and it is resolved and vanishes by comparison, reflection, and usage. Should any ambiguity still remain, the context, if carefully studied, with such complemental aids as can be obtained from other sources, will tend far to remove it.

Conventionality is thus only extended, not violated.

Now, how can we suppose a double sense in Scripture? Shall we suppose that the Most High, who knows how to use human language, abused that language, while employing it to communicate to men those things which pertain to their salvation? Shall we impute ignorance to Him? Or will He be guilty of deception, error, or voluntary obscurity? Let us beware. By assigning a double sense to Scripture, we attribute to the Divine Legislator a course of conduct which would excite indignation against a human legislator.

Further: the admission of such a hypothesis would produce consequences as disastrous as wide-spread.

Let us suppose, for a moment, that the Scripture has

many significations; that instead of a clear and single sense, of a nature to be investigated methodically, and accepted with confidence, it should have several mysterious senses, accessible only to certain cultured, subtile minds; that instead of being a perspicuous and popular book, level to every capacity and in harmony with our faculties, it should contain an enigma under each phrase. What would be the consequences, and what would become of the Bible?

The consequences would be the following:

§ 15. CONSEQUENCES OF THE HYPOTHESIS OF A MULTIPLE SENSE.

(*a*). First of all, the problem of interpretation becomes indeterminate. If all solutions, or if only several solutions are equally good, they can not be found methodically. Among the many zealous advocates of a multiplicity of senses, the man is still to be found, who would be willing to determine these senses by logic and analysis. They employ only their individual and arbitrary methods, or rather they leave the sense to each one's imagination. This proves the first consequence. We pass to the second.

(*b*). With a sense easy to be determined, the active dispositions excited in the interpreter and exercised by him are logic and good sense, united to love of truth and earnestness of faith. With the multiple sense, the subtile spirit, ingenious skill, the art of foreseeing mysteries, of discovering enigmas, and a vain curiosity, occupy in him the first place. In this case the Bible is not considered as given to man to instruct, to edify, and to direct him; but as given to the theologian to furnish a field for the display of his wit and vanity.

(*c*). In the third place, the hypothesis of a multiple

sense supposes and establishes a profound and radical distinction between the logical methods which God has given us in order to discover the truth, and the methods to be followed in the interpretation of Scripture; consequently between our faculties and Revelation, between the God of the intellect and the God of the Bible. It is no longer necessary to seek for those wonderful analogies between reason and faith, between nature and the Gospel, which delight the intelligent Christian, which persuade and convince the pious thinker. There is war, relentless war, between these two classes of truths. Man finds himself obliged to listen to two systems of logic, to two consciences, to two revelations, to two contradictory Gods. The Christian has a Bible that trifles with his candor and lays snares for his feet. Thus this hypothesis, apparently due to an extreme respect for the Bible, really conduces to bring it into contempt.

(*d*). Another consequence. In practice, even in the practice of pious people and of the most humble believers, what will the Bible become? It will become a changeable, doubtful law, flexible at the will of their fancies, or of their passions. In the case of different senses, given not by a logical method and a sound judgment, but by imagination and instinct, no one can claim the preference over others, no one has exclusive authority; but each one is left to arbitrary choice. In vain will we acknowledge, as legitimate, the authority of all: we will, in fact, choose, prefer, and direct our attention most favorably to the sense which we have discovered, to that which flatters our self-love, corresponds to our ideas, to our tendencies, and to our tastes, perhaps to our inclinations. In the meantime we will leave, in the shade and in oblivion, the clear and positive sense; the imperative and literal sense, which displeases us, perhaps because it condemns us, and perhaps the very sense

which must save us. Sad experience confirms what has just been said.

(*c*). Our last consequence is only the result and necessary conclusion of all those which precede. Delivered up to human fancies, the Bible is covered over with them and disfigured. The simple and transparent beauty of the Sacred Book gives place to a mass of human fancies, of mystical, allegorical, scholastic, philosophical, physical, and astronomical, glosses, sometimes ingenious and witty, never simple and popular. The pious Christian, who "hungers and thirsts after righteousness," seeks for the word of life, and finds in its place only human fancies and brilliant trifles. He longs bitterly for the simple, clear, edifying, and divine Bible of his youth. He feels like a godly theologian,* who, having listened to a sermon without piety, said with the weeping Mary: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." (John xx. 13).

§ 16. EXAMINATION A POSTERIORI.

The theory of the multiple sense of Scripture is, therefore, a paradox. But everything, even a paradox, must have a cause. Where shall we search for that of the theory in question? Is it found in real facts, or in selfish feelings? This is the point that now presents itself for examination. We shall, therefore, proceed to investigate (1) those Biblical facts which, without justifying this hypothesis, have been the occasion of it; and (2) the tendencies which have fortified it.

As to the Biblical facts, we are forced to enter somewhat into detail, and even to say many things which may seem useless; but that is not our fault. The advocates

* Lavater.

of a multiple sense have supported their theory not only by the facts, which appear to prove something and which deserve to be discussed; but also by a multitude of false and confused analogies, which can not sustain examination. To attain our object we are obliged to cite all the particulars and to reply to them.

The Biblical facts, upon which reliance has been placed to defend the theory of a multiple sense, are of very different kinds. They may be distinguished into *philological, symbolical, prophetical,* and *typical* facts.

§ 17. PHILOLOGICAL FACTS, *i. e.*, THOSE PERTAINING TO LANGUAGE.

These are, in the first place, passages so obscure as to be susceptible of several senses, which fact has led to the supposition that all these senses are equally well founded.

But these obscurities belong to the very essence of Revelation, which is composed of truths for the most part superior to our limited intelligence, and yet placed in harmony with it. These truths must be expressed in human language, made for this world and inadequate to the expression of them. Hence, passages which possess an obscure character, depths which can not be completely sounded, mysteries that can not be fully unveiled, problems which the human mind has attempted to resolve in different ways, frequently occur. In such instances several senses may seem to be equally plausible and to fulfill equally the requirements of exegesis, and hence it has been concluded that such passages possess several senses, or a double sense. But the double sense lies in the feebleness of the human mind, not in Revelation. It pertains either to our incapacity to grasp divine things in their totality, or to the impossibility of express-

ing them with sufficient clearness, but not to the real nature of the truths revealed. In other words, the difficulty exists only in ourselves; it does not exist in God.

Other facts, in the second place, pertain to the special nature of the language which has been employed as the vehicle of Revelation, which has been clothed with popular forms strongly impressed with the habits of the East, that is to say, with metaphorical, poetical, and parabolical forms, which convey a meaning different from that of the literal sense of the words. But even then there are not two senses, the literal and the metaphorical. The metaphorical is alone the real sense; the literal does not exist as a sense; it is only the vehicle of the former; it contains in itself no result, no truth. There is, therefore, only one real sense.

Some may perhaps offer, by way of objection, two particular cases of metaphorical language, allegories and paronomasias. The consideration of these cases will detain us a moment.

Allegories are only prolonged metaphors, which we may treat as we do ordinary metaphors. They have only the appearance of a double sense; but one finds in them really no double idea. And, which is a remarkable fact, allegories, which are so frequent with the writers of the East, are in the Bible, rare, brief, and clear. Considered under this point of view, the Scriptures are widely distinguished from other Oriental writings; and we are led to see, in this distinction, the spirit of clearness, of simplicity, and of unity, which God has made the essential characteristic of His work.

Paronomasias are frequent in the Bible; but no more than allegories do they contain a double sense. Paronomasia is a play upon words. It is a figure of speech by which the same word is used in different senses, or words similar in sound are set in opposition to each

other, so as to give a kind of antithetical force to the sentence. It is a play upon the sound of a word, by which a new and unexpected meaning is given to it. But are there, in such a case, two senses, that is, two simultaneous ideas, between which we may hesitate or choose? No. There are two distinct and successive ideas connected by a play upon words. Often they contain only a single idea, which is rendered more striking by the resemblance between the syllables of similar sound. To call that a double sense, to see in it a motive, an argument, a reason to suppose that the phrases of the Bible may properly be interpreted in different senses, is to take up a vague semblance as a reality, without the least endeavor to distinguish what is literal from a metaphor, and from a play upon words.

§ 18. SYMBOLICAL FACTS.

We designate as such facts that are real and sufficiently clear, facts which do not prove a double sense, nor form any presumption in its favor, but from which some have believed that they could derive support for this theory on account of their singular and striking character.

These facts are first the symbolical actions of the prophets—a means wholly Oriental—which they employed to impress the imagination and to fix firmly in the memory the future events thus announced. For example, Ezekiel (xii. 7) made a breach in the wall of his house, and escaped through it by night, laden with his goods, in order to announce the assault which was to be made upon Jerusalem, and the disastrous flight of the king of Judah. Acts of this kind are very frequent with some prophets; but the prophet himself took care to explain them: the sense, far from being multiple, was

very positive, and attained its object only on this condition. What connection can we find between these significant actions and words of a double sense? They furnish, without doubt, evident proof of the Oriental taste for figurative language; but that is all. How can any one, from these perfectly clear facts, intended to convey, in a more striking manner, instruction no less clear and incontestable, draw anything in favor of the extravagant conceits of Origen and Cocceius?

There is another class of facts about which we ought to say a word—a class very different from the first, but as little applicable to the point which they are intended to prove.

We mean *institutions*, designed, at least secondarily, to preserve, or to awaken certain ideas. The science, the object of which is to collect and explain the facts of these institutions, is called *Symbolics*.

For example, a bloody sacrifice implied, on the part of him who offered the victim, the confession of his faults and of sins worthy of punishment. The offerings and first-fruits, required by the Mosaic law, were a recognition of the right of property which Jehovah, the God and King of the Hebrews, claimed in their country. The concentric enclosures of the temple of Jerusalem and the gradual purifications of those who had the privilege of entering them, taught clearly the holiness of God and the pollution of man.

All this is true, without doubt; but in what does it conduce to the double or to the quadruple sense of a single phrase, or of a single passage?

Symbolics, an interesting and an important science, has been sometimes exaggerated to a ridiculous and absurd degree. Nevertheless, in its greatest exaggerations, it has remained completely and necessarily distinct from the theories of the multiple sense.

§ 19. PROPHETICAL FACTS.

It is on the prophecies that the advocates of the theory of a double sense chiefly rely for support; and from the prophetical writings the theory has been extended to the whole Bible.

Some special facts explain this: 1. The first is the obscurity more or less inherent in all the prophecies, in consequence of their object and their very nature.

It results from the nature of Revelation that, while revealed laws must be clear and doctrines distinctly and positively taught, prophecies can be clearly understood only after the event. It is not difficult to perceive that their entire freedom from all ambiguity, or indefiniteness, would be accompanied with many inconveniences: it would be in opposition to the analogy of the divine methods; and moreover, it would be impossible in fact. Was not the prophet under the necessity of expressing himself in images, in ideas, in contemporaneous and local phrases concerning facts and truths, with which the men of his time were not conversant, and which consequently they could not clearly understand? He, therefore, who uttered prophecies, uttered obscure revelations, and yet of a nature to fix attention and to excite curiosity. The result of this has been that prophecies oftentimes appear susceptible of different solutions; and that, instead of choosing between these solutions, some have yielded to the temptation of adding others to them.

2. The attentive study of the prophecies has led some men of science, and at the same time devout Christians, to admit that a portion of this obscurity is due to the individuality of the prophets. According to this hypothesis, the natural faculties of the prophet were, as a consequence of the nature of prophetical inspiration, the

recipients of the supernatural but incomplete knowledge imparted to him. His faculties retained their normal condition and were exercised in a normal manner, while under the prophetic afflatus. It was, moreover, generally by a species of vision that the prophet acquired a knowledge of the future. Some confusion would result from this, especially as to the time to which the prophet referred the objects of the vision, and consequently as to the objects themselves, when there was any analogy between them. Events of the same nature, which might appertain really to times very different, presented themselves to him as connected in time, and as types, the one of the other.

For example, the deliverance of Israel and redemption, the restoration of worship and the calling of the Gentiles. In this state of things, interpreters who have not discovered this key to the obscurities of prophecy, have been led to the conclusion that such prophecies have, at the same time, two objects and two senses.

3. The New Testament contains a great many prophecies, quoted by the Apostles from the Old Testament, in a sense which some imagine to be very different from the primary one in the O. T. It is not necessary to produce these examples here, since everybody knows them. Setting out from the correct idea that the Apostles were inspired and infallible expounders of Scripture, and assuming that the sense given by them to the quotations just mentioned is different from that which they have in their original place, some have adopted the view that all such passages have two senses, and, perhaps, more. In this way the theory of a double sense is made to rest on the inspiration of the Apostles.

The quotations from the Old Testament in the New have occasioned much difficulty to Biblical critics. This difficulty arises sometimes from the application of such

quotations; for example, when they are applied to a purpose to which they *seem* to have no relation, according to their original design. The writers of the New Testament make quotations from the Old with very different views; we must attend, therefore, to their real view in a particular quotation. An accurate distinction must be made between such quotations as, being merely borrowed, are used as the words of the writer himself, and such as are quoted in proof of a doctrine, or the completion of a prophecy.

§ 20. TYPICAL FACTS.

These facts are the most prominent, the best known, and those upon which theologians who advocate the double sense, rely with the greatest confidence.

It is the opinion of theologians, both of early and modern times, that many of the events, personages, and institutions of the Old Testament were designed by the Holy Spirit to typify and predict events, personages, and institutions of the New. These events, personages, and institutions of the Old Testament, which were so designed, are called *types;* and their corresponding objects in the New are called *antitypes.* Admitting the existence of such types, the theory of a double sense does not follow. Nevertheless they contribute indirectly to the theory by accustoming the reader to look at something else than the literal sense and the recorded fact.

Some theologians who reject the theory of a double sense, to evade the conclusion that it *seems* to result from the system of types in the Old Testament, discard types altogether and have recourse to the convenient principle of accommodation. This principle, or theory, is perhaps more dangerous than that which it seeks to

displace. It fails to take sufficiently into account the connection subsisting between the O. T. and the N. T. dispensations. In the words of St. Augustine, the former is a prophecy of the latter. The Old Testament contains the New in germ. Moreover, it is necessary to have a due regard to the essential difference between the nature of type and antitype. The typical is Divine truth on a lower stage, exhibited by means of outward relations and terrestrial interests; the antitypical is Divine truth on a higher stage, with a more heavenly aspect. In the former, we see the outward, the present, the worldly; in the latter, the inward, the future, the heavenly. Considered thus, types lend no aid to the theory of a double sense.

§ 21. RESULTS OF THESE FACTS.

If we now sum up this rapid examination of the different classes of facts, and of the Biblical phenomena, upon which some have pretended to found the theory of a double sense, we will discover the two following results—the one negative, the other positive:

1. The negative result:

The imperfection of human language, the imperfection of men to whom Revelation was made; and the imperfection of those who were employed as its instruments.

2. Positive result:

The intimate relations, real and divine, between the Old and the New Testaments—relations that evidently rendered the former preparatory to and predictive of the latter. This is particularly proved by the symbolical institutions, prophecies, and types of the Old. Nothing is found to support the theory of a double sense. This theory has its origin in the forgetfulness of the negative result, in the exaggeration of the positive,

and especially in the badly regulated imaginations of certain divines.

This brings us to a new element in our examination *a posteriori*—that of the intellectual tendencies, which have developed and fortified, in the Church, the theory of a double sense.

§ 22. TENDENCIES WHICH HAVE FAVORED THE THEORY OF A DOUBLE SENSE.

There are three tendencies which have favored the theory of a double sense.

1. *An intellectual tendency.*

Among the divines of the primitive Church, and among those of the Middle Ages, there was a common lack of logic and of method. Generally speaking, the methodical and philosophical spirit, especially in the theological sciences, is modern. The men of genius, in the first centuries of the Church—the Origens and the Augustines—who exercised a commanding influence upon succeeding generations, were distinguished for their sensibility, piety, and imagination, qualities necessary, without doubt, to a student and interpreter of Scripture; but they lacked that logical and profound critical spirit which is so essential to enable him to accomplish his work successfully. They eagerly adopted the theory of a double sense, a theory which was in harmony with their mental constitution, and with their mystical tendencies; and their eminence in the Church and the force of their genius gave authority to it in the following ages.

In our day we see many theologians who are inclined to prefer the imagination to reason, the ingenious to the true, the new to the useful. The imagination is sometimes unduly excited by the study of theology, especially when it treats of prophecies and miracles.

2. *A moral tendency*, or the absence of a humble and profound love of the truth.

It is a matter of regret that many interpreters are not actuated, above every other consideration, by a conscientious desire to discover and possess the truth. Certain dispositions of heart unite themselves to tendencies of the mind and lead into error. The want of logic, with which the fathers of the Church have been reproached, is less common in our days; but by way of compensation, there is much less real respect for the true sense of the Holy Scriptures. It is a common thing to meet with interpreters who are possessed with the desire to dazzle by the novelty of their interpretations, and who, wedded to a system, have recourse to forced expositions for the purpose of harmonizing it with embarrassing passages. The theory of a double sense is singularly convenient to sustain a cherished interpretation, without appearing to deny the common one.

3. *Religious tendency.*

A third defect, which is often found united to the second, is want of faith. This assertion will, without doubt, astonish many, and yet it is not too severe. When an interpreter of the Holy Scriptures seeks any other sense than that which naturally presents itself, he often does it because that sense is repugnant to his convictions. He seeks, in this case, to evade the natural sense, and labors to replace it by another more favorable to his views and tastes. Sometimes, like the ancient Jews of Alexandria, he is ashamed of the literal sense of Scripture and endeavors to give to it one more agreeable to men of refined wits. He rejects its severe precepts, the doctrines which condemn his system, and interprets them in harmony with it.

In all these cases he fails in love, or admiration, or

respect for the Scriptures, or in docility; in other words, he is wanting in faith.

Such are the moral causes, which, joined to the Biblical facts, of which we have spoken above, appear to us to have originated and promoted the theory of a double sense.

We conclude, therefore, from the foregoing inquiry, that the theory of a multiple sense is without foundation; that the Scripture has a sense unique, positive, and capable of being investigated. This being admitted renders Hermeneutics a possible science.

SECTION FOURTH.

NATURAL DIVISION OF HERMENEUTICS.

§ 23. GENERAL REFLECTIONS.

HERMENEUTICS is the science which furnishes the true principles of interpretation.

To interpret is to reproduce the impression produced by the author upon his contemporaries; it is to reproduce exactly this entire impression, with all its elements, the emotions as well as the ideas.

It is still more. It is to reproduce what the author himself experienced while writing, and what he wished to make his readers experience.

These principles are the basis of Hermeneutics, whatever may be the books interpreted.

Biblical Hermeneutics, which is occupied in the interpretation of the Bible, does not differ at all in its nature from General Hermeneutics. It differs only in extent, inasmuch as it does not aim only at reproducing the thought of the respective authors of the Bible, but also and principally the revealed thought of which they were the depositaries.

It is the aim of Hermeneutics to attain to this revealed thought. If it should cease its efforts to this end, it would lose its value and utility. The method of arriving at it is by the study of the sacred authors, whose writings are to be analyzed according to the laws of language. To accomplish this we must make a legitimate use of those mental and moral faculties necessary for such labor.

The utility of the science being admitted, the question arises: What are its elements, or constituent parts, upon which hermeneutical principles are founded, or from which they are drawn?

To attain to a full interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, the interpreter must perform successively different operations upon their contents. These operations we will now briefly describe.

§ 24. ANALYSIS OF THE ELEMENTS OF THE SCIENCE.

First step:

The books to be interpreted are written in different languages. It is necessary, therefore, first of all, that the interpreter should have an exact knowledge of the precise meaning of the words and phrases with which he meets in these languages. After he has acquired this knowledge, he must then make a careful elementary analysis of each passage, determine it, and elucidate it by all the resources of philology.

The rules that guide the interpreter in this part of his task are furnished by Sacred Philology, and we call the collection of them *Grammatical Hermeneutics.*

Second step:

The sense of words thus found will still, in many instances, have equivocal elements, and it will often be too vague to attain fully the proposed object. Something more, therefore, than the grammatical sense is necessary. The exegete must assure himself of the precise ideas which the sacred writers attached to the words, and of the minute shades of these ideas. Two methods are required to accomplish this, the one *a priori*, and the other *a posteriori;* and these two methods furnish two new classes of rules.

1. *A priori.*—According to this method, the inter-

preter inquires about the influence exercised upon the thoughts and expressions of the writer by means of the circumstances of position, time, country, and, in general, by means of his external relations. Rules drawn from this source guide our investigations in Isagogics and Archæology, and the collective body of them constitutes *Historical Hermeneutics.*

When the interpreter has arrived at this point his task will not be accomplished. Suppose that he undertakes to explain the words of Jesus to the paralytic: "My son, thy sins be forgiven thee" (Mark ii. 5), Grammatical Hermeneutics may readily do its work, but it will not fathom the depth of meaning which these words contain. Historical Hermeneutics may show that our Saviour alludes to a contemporary Jewish opinion that corporeal infirmities are the providential punishment of sin. It will reduce, perhaps, the declaration of Christ to this idea: "I deliver thee from thy infirmity by pardoning the sin which has caused it." Many witnesses of the scene could not, indeed, understand the words otherwise. But we ought not to lower ourselves to their level, and believe that this pardon of sins, so often offered and granted by Jesus, was only an accommodation to a prevailing opinion. Is not something else necessary to understand these words correctly?

Jesus said: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. v. 48). Grammatical Hermeneutics may search deeply into, discuss, and analyze the word "perfect": Historical Hermeneutics may explain learnedly the origin and force of the title, "Father which is in heaven"; but with all this, will the precept of Jesus be explained, and will we acquire its real value and the precise idea?

For the purpose, therefore, of arriving at the complete sense of the sacred writers, we add to Historical

Hermeneutics *a posteriori* rules deduced from the Bible itself.

2. *A posteriori.*—These rules are deduced from the general study of the Bible, from the special study of its several portions, and from the relations of these to the whole. This class of rules we call *Scriptural Hermeneutics.*

By these different methods we arrive at the literal sense of the words and the precise idea of the sacred writers.

But the science of Hermeneutics is not yet complete. A third step is necessary. We must search for and determine the divine revelation, the revealed idea deposited in the chapter, or phrase.

Prior to examination we can have no proof of the identity of the divine and the human idea. Granting that the sacred writers were inspired, they were nevertheless men subject to all the limitations of humanity. St. Augustine uttered a profound saying, which serves as a motto, and sums up the entire subject: De Deo homo dixit, et quidem inspiratus a Deo, *sed tamen homo.*

Hence arrives a new and grave problem to be solved, namely, that of the nature and extent of inspiration. This part of our inquiry we designate *Doctrinal Hermeneutics.*

§ 25. CONDITIONS NECESSARY TO THE PROSECUTION OF THE SCIENCE.

Having stated the different elements of the science, we must mention a condition essential to its successful prosecution. It is the dispositions which an interpreter should possess. To make good music requires something more than good musical instruments: it requires, in addition to these, a skillful musician. In the same

way, something more than rules is necessary to interpretation: there must be a properly qualified interpreter. What are the conditions which render him such? This question demands examination.

We do not speak of scientific conditions. These are taken for granted; and the enumeration of them would more appropriately find a place in a theological encyclopedia than in Hermeneutics.

Neither do we speak of exegetical conditions, which apply to habit, sagacity, and practice. These belong to art rather than to science, to practical details rather than to general rules, to Exegetics rather than to Hermeneutics.

The dispositions, which we have now in view, are the intellectual and moral dispositions of the interpreter, his faculties more than his erudition, his tendencies of mind more than his methods. Hermeneutics has, too long, neglected to make account of these dispositions so necessary to an interpreter. Now it is disposed to recognize their importance. The investigation of these conditions we denominate *Psychological Hermeneutics.*

With this we begin, as being the most important, and that which most nearly concerns the interpreter. The conditions should be known before the means.

PART FIRST.

PSYCHOLOGICAL HERMENEUTICS.

§ 26. ITS NECESSITY.

PSYCHOLOGICAL Hermeneutics is the investigation of the moral and intellectual conditions, devoid of which the interpreter is incapable of accomplishing his task. The developments already made, and those which shall yet be made throughout the whole of this treatise, are sufficient to show its importance.

One can not interpret without understanding that which he interprets. This is a self-evident truth. Now, to understand the thought of another is so to conceive it in one's own mind as to be able to reproduce it to others without change or modification. In order to this, it is necessary first of all to possess a variety of faculties sufficiently developed. According as these are sound or vitiated, exercised or dormant, will the interpreter attain to a right or a wrong understanding of his subject. This is not all. In addition to these absolute qualifications he must possess qualifications relative to the author whom he intends to interpret. To understand and reproduce the thoughts of another in their full meaning, it is necessary to assimilate them and make them one's own; which supposes in the interpreter not only a variety of faculties sufficiently developed, but faculties of the same order with those of the writer. In order to receive and reproduce a sublime impression, or a philosophic idea, something more is required than a grammatical knowledge of the language, or a historical

knowledge of the times: the writer must possess faculties specially adapted to æsthetic and philosophical studies. Will any one pretend that the child who recites the fables of Fontaine understands them? Will a Geometer, who is only a geometer, easily understand Racine; or a peasant, Tacitus, or Bossuet? A Newton or a La Place would be a poor commentator on Homer or Milton.

This is still more evident in regard to the religious than it is in regard to the literary intelligence; for religious truths and feelings constitute a special sphere, into which the soul must enter and live in order to understand them. The man who has neither experience in these things, nor taste for them, mistakes their import and falls into error. How many Biblical commentaries there are sparkling with genius and replete with knowledge, but from which very little profit is to be derived, because they lack that good religious sense which is born of the habit of applying religion to the life. As long as the critical faculty and erudition suffice, the author appears an eminent exegete; but when a question of experience and of religious feeling presents itself, through the want of common sense and piety, he either disfigures, or entirely misses the meaning of the simplest teachings.

How much importance, then, ought the theologian worthy of the name, to attach to that internal capacity, to that state of intelligence and of soul, which can either open to him or close the doors of truth, which can breathe life into his work, or blight it with death.

The normal condition, which we require of the interpreter of the Holy Scriptures, appears to us to be composed of *faculties*, *tendencies* or *dispositions*, and *principles*.

We can give in this treatise only a rapid and imperfect sketch of the points that are most important and most neglected.

SECTION FIRST.

FACULTIES WITH WHICH THE INTERPRETER SHOULD BE ENDOWED.

§ 27. INTELLECTUAL FACULTIES.

THE interpreter has need of a clear and vigorous understanding, and of a sound judgment. Without judgment he can not discriminate between truth and falsehood; and without truth his labor will fail of any good result.

Without judgment science is only a snare to the interpreter, who, in that case, resembles a lawyer that entangles himself scientifically in the application of the clearest laws.

The exegete has, moreover, need of imagination, but under proper control. To symbolize this the Greeks represented Pegasus with a bridle as well as with wings. The language of Scripture is strongly colored: the style is loaded with images. It was addressed directly to readers accustomed to the language of poetry, and habituated to call in the aid of imagination, in order to express even religious and abstract truth. The cold and learned theologian, who analyzes this language as a formula, is often deceived, and sometimes grievously. He resembles a blind man who discourses upon colors. However, if a certain degree of imagination is necessary to the exegete, the excess of it is pernicious, for it destroys the judgment. Good sense should, at all times, be his ruling and regulative faculty—a faculty which leaves to the other faculties a sufficient, but limited,

field of action. The excess of imagination is, perhaps, more to be feared in religious science than elsewhere, because this science tends to exalt this faculty. Upon each page the Bible presents to the theologian for examination the supernatural and the mysterious. Hence it calls his imagination into play, and invites him to have recourse to it; but, at the same time, it exposes him to serious errors, unless he knows how to regulate it. In this, as always and everywhere, that which is useful to the theologian is the equilibrium of all his faculties, rather than the excessive and isolated development of a few.

§ 28. MORAL FACULTIES.

What we have just said of the imagination is equally true of the sensibility. This should not predominate over the intelligence. It can not legitimate an interpretation; but it is indispensable to the interpreter; for without it, he is incapable of understanding many things. At least he can understand them only imperfectly; and he will notice, as obscure, vague, or unimportant, perhaps the richest instructions, even such as, addressed to the sensibility, were intended to produce upon the reader the most powerful and decisive impression.

There are many passages of Scripture which present a good sense only on the condition of their being felt, sublime when they affect the heart, but absurd when logic alone analyzes them. Job exclaims, in a transport of confidence, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (xiii. 15). Here we have a proposition logically absurd: it is a cry of the heart, and as such it is sublime. The epistles of Paul are understood only when we seek the train of the emotions along with that of the ideas. As long as we deduce from them only formulas, they often appear obscure and confused; but when we seek for the

movements, the struggles, and the outpourings of a loving soul torn with anguish, we discover new and precious treasures.

And the Psalms, the book of suffering, loving, and penitent souls—the Psalms, an admirable monument of an all-embracing piety, which embellishes nature, charms life, alleviates grief, transforms afflictions, and unites the soul to God, how can they be understood, and what can we make of them, if we reduce them to logical formulas, and neglect, in the interpretation of them, to consult our own hearts and the heart of the royal prophet?

The Scriptures were evidently written as much for the heart as for the intellect. God intended this, and for reasons easy to be understood. He intended them not only for enlightened men, for men of logical ability and accustomed to investigation, not for theologians only, but for all classes of men, for men of every nation and of every degree of intelligence. He intended them to be the nourishment and the consolation of the weak in intellect and of the young, to furnish instruction for the ignorant, and to be the inheritance of the poor. In a word, He intended that they should be addressed to the most numerous and the most unhappy portion of the human race. Now, in this mass, how many are there who are capable of attaining to a logical understanding of the Scriptures? Very few. How many, on the contrary, are capable of feeling their power, and of receiving from them, by the aid of the sensibility, a just and strong, though vague and incomplete, impression? It is safe to say, nearly all. The friends of humanity ought, therefore, to thank God for addressing His word especially to hearts susceptible of feeling and emotion. The interpreter, then, should, in order to accomplish the duties of his office, possess sensibility. He should seek the aid of his heart, and not bind himself slavishly to the requirements of logic.

SECTION SECOND.

DISPOSITIONS NECESSARY TO THE INTERPRETER.

§ 29. LOVE OF TRUTH.

FACULTIES are natural gifts, which the theologian can and ought to develop. The germ of these he received at his birth. We specify here the dispositions which he ought to cultivate, and which are necessary to him.

The first is the love of truth.

In order to discover the truth it is necessary to seek for it; in order to obtain it, we must love it, and love it in preference to every speculative theory, to every interest of the heart and of the life.

The interpreter must be animated to the pursuit of it as to that of a noble object and a holy work. He should regard his responsibility with a feeling blended with fear and respect and impose silence upon his passions in the presence of his high ministry. Only piety and faith can give him this disposition in a sufficient degree; but he ought, at the very start, to place himself on guard against three elements of error incompatible with sincere love of truth.

(1). We specify first, attachment to preconceived opinions, which, instead of guiding and shaping our investigations, should be kept in abeyance. The interpreter should, if possible, undertake the task of interpretation without preconceived opinions; but, as that can not be done, he should, at least, subject such opinions to the special result of his interpretation legitimately deduced from the Scriptures. He should be desirous above all

to discover the truth, and disposed to modify his ideas in accordance with the result of his examination.

The exegete sits down to read and to analyze an epistle of St. Paul. No one can, nor ought to, demand of him to come to this task, without a conviction of the fundamental doctrines of natural religion and of the Christian faith, and even of the inspired authority of St. Paul; but he ought to forget, as far as possible, during his work, the opinions that he has already formed of the Apostle and of his epistle, in order to elicit sincerely, by a conscientious and philosophic interpretation of it, all that it can teach him.

This disposition is rare. Moreover, it is scarcely ever seriously enough applied, or judiciously enough regulated. Some exaggerate it by demanding, under the name of impartiality, a complete skepticism; though all that can be required of the exegete is a conscientious examination of the doctrine of the author that occupies his attention. Others, by far the greatest number, neglect it and are decided, in advance, upon what they wish to find.

Facts prove this in the most sad and decisive manner, since religious denominations, holding doctrines the most opposite, put forward, with the utmost sincerity, their respective creeds as the only true summaries of Scriptural doctrine. Philosophical sects do the same thing, at least those which do not place themselves out of the pale of Christianity. The disciples of Plato, of Aristotle, of Locke, of Descartes, of Hegel, and of St. Martin, all endeavor to show that they have the true sense of Scripture. Was it not, at least at first, in the name of Scripture that the modern Socialists attacked society, the family, and the faith?

(2). To impartiality of mind the interpreter should join impartiality of heart. If preconceived opinions op-

pose obstacles to honesty of examination, strong feelings of interest present obstacles equally strong. The fear of man, the prejudices of the Church and of society, the desire of reputation and of glory destroy the love of truth. How frequent is this evil. How many visionary hypotheses have had their origin in the desire of occupying some conspicuous place in some learned university.

A sincere desire to be the servant of truth is necessary to the discovery of it. This noble desire should put to silence all others. The scholar who studies, the Christian who examines, and the ecclesiastic who teaches, have each a responsibility from which the pure love of truth alone can release them. This triple responsibility the theologian who interprets incurs in all its extent.

If there is anything humiliating to criticism and theology, it is that this responsibility is sometimes so imperfectly understood. Let the student ponder it deeply beforehand, and contemplate his future career less from the point of view of his interests than from that of his duties.

(3). The work of the interpreter is not only vitiated in its source by opinions previously and obstinately formed, or by opposite interests; it is also vitiated, in a greater or less degree, by all the moral defects of the heart. The interpreter should be not only impartial and disinterested, but also, so far as corrupt human nature will allow, morally perfect. This statement may occasion surprise; but the least reflection will show that the heart always influences the mind, and that defects of the former cause imperfections in the latter. The proud man will not easily renounce his opinions when proved to be untenable. He will not be impartial, and will zealously seek for discoveries which he expected to make. The egotist will fail in sensibility, and will form

a very imperfect idea of the emotional in Scripture. The low, interested, vicious, degraded man will always see through a veil of flesh and blood.

How important is it, therefore, that the interpreter should labor to purify his soul and raise it to the height of Christian virtue, in order to attain to the true dignity of his task—a task fearful in its responsibility, but noble and exalted.

§ 30. SEARCH FOR CLEAR IDEAS.

The second disposition required of the interpreter is the desire to acquire clear ideas. He needs them and must use effort to attain them.

Every man of intelligence, be he student or scholar, pupil or teacher, advances toward his object only by enlarging the extent of his ideas, and by acquiring clearness of them. The means to attain clearness is study. As we have said in regard to truth, in order to obtain this clearness of ideas we must love it and seek after it. The man who does not make it his duty and does not employ his energy to secure it, will be contented with appearances, with phrases, with formulas, with confused theories, that is to say, with errors.

In the moral and metaphysical sciences this danger is greater than in the physical and experimental sciences. The former do not possess, like the latter, material facts, visible and repeated experiments to serve as tests; hence shallow minds are much more liable to take, in the former, the appearance for the reality, and words for things. This fault is very common in the moral and metaphysical sciences. Nowhere is clearness of idea more rare, and, at the same time, more necessary.

These considerations are still more applicable to Theology, especially to Biblical Theology, than to any of

the sciences just mentioned. Here, as the truth pertains to a supernatural and mysterious order of things, and, consequently, obscure, it is more necessary, than in other sciences, to endeavor to have clear ideas of the matters which come under consideration. The sensibility and the imagination exercise, and ought to exercise, such an influence upon interpretation as sometimes to evade this keen scent of logic. In short, personal interests, passions, and strifes, very often intimately concern the results to be obtained. Hence arises frequently and inevitably the temptation to make use of formulas in default of ideas, in order to disguise or modify these results.

No one can deny that many theologians have erred much in this respect. In the different hermeneutical applications, and especially in ancient dogmatics, there are a great many arguments and interpretations which are only formulas traditionally handed down from former centuries, and which contain no positive nor distinct idea. They do not enlighten the understanding in anything. Their words can neither be changed nor commented upon without losing their import. Nevertheless they are generally received, because they are convenient and dispense with thought, doubt, and close attention. Some of the theological formulas employed to explain the mysterious doctrine of the Trinity, and of the constitution of the Person of Christ, are of this kind.

It is the duty of the interpreter never to be contented with purely traditional words, but to pursue his meditation until he has associated a positive idea with such words as he decides to employ. This statement is not intended to imply that he can arrive at the possession of clear ideas upon everything which pertains to religion, for the nature of man, as well as that of God, precludes this. All that is meant is that his words should always express, without ambiguity, a real idea. He should un-

derstand clearly everything which he declares to be clear, and everything which he pretends to explain by a precise formula; and he should declare positively obscure that which remains obscure. In those matters of religion which surpass intelligence, he ought to comprehend clearly the fact that they do surpass it; also in what they surpass it, and in what they do not surpass it. The fact that they surpass our intelligence should not hinder us from believing them, for while we can not believe what is contrary to reason, we can and do believe many things that are above it.

§ 31. FAITH AND PIETY.

The interpreter, in order to accomplish his task well, has need of faith and piety. Let us explain this statement.

It does not mean that the interpreter, in order to understand the Bible and exhibit its meaning, must be enlightened by the Holy Spirit; so that, in fault of this supernatural illumination, the Bible would be a sealed book calculated to blind and harden. On this hypothesis there would be no place for the human faculties; no religious examination would be possible and legitimate; there would be no motive to distribute the Bible abroad; and consequently no Hermeneutics to study.

But it does mean that, in order to apprehend the contents of the Bible, in order to elucidate its difficulties, in order to find the key to obscure passages, and thus to accomplish fully the task of interpretation, the interpreter must have already known, felt, and examined with pleasure and success the prominent characteristics of the Scriptures, and derived from them the sentiment of the beauty, the sanctity, and divinity of his work. The science of Apologetics, when complete, ought to be a re-

sult of Hermeneutics. The former can not precede the latter. While this is true, Hermeneutics, on the other hand, can be complete only by the aid of Apologetics. Between the proofs furnished by Apologetics and Hermeneutics there should be a constant action and reaction, and thus there will be a continual and simultaneous progress of both sciences.

1. A religious conviction is often logically necessary to interpretation; not a particular conviction of such and such a doctrine, but a general conviction of the attributes of God and of the authentic and divine origin of the Bible. According as we believe that God is holy, we will choose the one or the other of the opposite interpretations of such or such a passage. According as we are, or not disposed to accept Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world, we will receive His discourses with the spirit of the apostles, or with that of the Pharisees. Without doubt, it would be better, viewing the matter from a purely intellectual and logical point of view, as we have already said, that the interpreter should have no preconceived opinions; but as this is intellectually and morally impossible, he must have a judicious, stable intellect, exempt from all selfish influences, fully capable of, and prepared for, philosophical investigation. This condition can not be dispensed with in the interpreter.

2. More than intelligence is required in order to understand the Bible. Religious sensibility is also necessary. This alone can place the interpreter in complete harmony with the thoughts and feelings of the author. Piety has its own language, which a stranger to it can not understand. It can only be understood by experiencing pious emotions. Where pious hearts find ideas, knowledge, emotions, and sources of conviction, cold and worldly hearts find only inexplicable words, which they reject with disdain, after having vainly endeavored to

penetrate into their sense. How can an emotion or a joy be explained to one who has never felt it? How can a science be rendered intelligible, to a man who does not even apprehend its object? How can a blind man understand colors? How can a sensual and avaricious materialist appreciate the Psalms or St. John?

3. One of the most remarkable characteristics of the Bible is the wonderful and profound accord which reigns between its teachings, its precepts, and the wants and sorrows of the human heart. The heart of man is at once the complement, the commentary, and the key of the Bible. How, then, can it be understood, explained in its details, and appreciated in its entirety by one who is not in the habit of living with it, and of entering into its heart, who, a stranger to religious thoughts, is unconscious of his moral maladies, and ignorant of himself?

We must not, however, forget the real inconveniences which beset the interpreter, who has already commenced to expound the Scriptures, and to expound them in a certain sense, for the purpose of being able to advance in his work, and not remain lost in chaos. There is always a danger of not being rigorously impartial; but, as we have said, no interpreter can attain to such a state of mind. There is always a danger of deciding in accordance with one's internal and individual experiences; but it is thus only that the interpretation of the Bible can be complete and applied to life. There is this danger; it is inevitable and universal, and explains the great variety of interpretations. If one can not remove this evil, he can, at least, diminish it: (*a*) by determining his own religious convictions by a profound, complete, repeated, and varied self-examination; (*b*) by striving to forget, in the act of biblical interpretation, his own religious sentiments. He must impose silence, for the time,

upon his will, his desires, and preconceived opinions, in order to perform, with the utmost conscientiousness and sincerity, the hermeneutical examination of each passage.

To sum up: The irreligious interpreter is morally unfit for the task of biblical interpretation. The religious interpreter is exposed to the danger of deceiving himself. The duty which Hermeneutics imposes is not simply scientific and logical: it is principally moral. The interpreter must be conscientious, circumspect, and laborious. He ought constantly to mistrust his passions and opinions, and also be diffident of his ability and even of his success.

SECTION THIRD.

DUTIES OF THE INTERPRETER.

A WORD, before concluding, upon the point from which the interpreter ought to consider his task, or upon the nature and extent of the examination which he undertakes.

§ 32. THIS EXAMINATION OUGHT TO EMBRACE THE ENTIRE BIBLE AND TO BE FREQUENTLY REPEATED.

The more delicate and difficult the hermeneutical task is, the greater responsibility it imposes upon the interpreter, the more imperative is his duty to attain to a knowledge of the whole Bible, and to examine profoundly into its meaning. Unless he does this, he will be much more exposed to the influence of selfish interests and of preconceived opinions than he would otherwise be. It is this labor alone that will make the interpreter acquainted with the spirit of the Bible, the successive progress of its teachings, the special characteristics and relative value of its different parts, its general character, and the purposes of God in revelation.

Every theologian ought to be an exegete. But many read and study only certain portions of the Bible. Some confine their reading and meditations to the New Testament. Many read superficially, without stopping to examine and elucidate obscure passages. Many neglect the original texts. Hence mutual recrimination in regard to vagueness of ideas. They are guided in the

adoption of their opinions more by circumstances, education, and authority, than by independent examination.

This examination ought, moreover, to be continued throughout life. In proportion as one advances in age, psychological data, the experience of society, and positive knowledge, present themselves under new aspects; and, accumulating, modify and increase the resources of the interpreter, and furnish him with the means of renewing the examination with increased advantage. Moreover, if this examination were ever interrupted, its results would be obliterated from the heart and memory; faith in the Bible, rendered inoperative by the cares of life, would become vague and incoherent. Meditation and constant study of the Holy Scriptures are absolutely necessary to refresh, nourish, and render clear, vivid, and fruitful the knowledge and religious convictions of the theologian. These are his daily food, just as necessary to his soul and his faith as bread is to his body.

Can there be, then, any need of directing attention to the importance of this complete and constant examination of the Scriptures, in relation to the other duties of the theologian, to Apologetics, to the pastoral functions, to preaching?

§ 33. THIS EXAMINATION OUGHT TO BE MADE WITH DISTRUST OF ONE'S SELF AND WITH A FEELING OF ONE'S OWN WEAKNESS.

This is evident, since the interpreter is liable to be deceived through the imperfection of his faculties, the limitation of his knowledge, and the bent of his dispositions. What diversities do we find in the results to which Hermeneutics conducts different theologians; and consequently what errors — errors not only on the part of men of moderate ability, but on that of men whose

ability is universally acknowledged. Where is the critic so eminent; who has not sometimes, in spite of his science and sagacity, fallen into some strange and unexpected mistake? What scientific motives, therefore, has the judicious theologian to regard with jealousy his methods and results; and what motives of duty and piety has he to fear presumption, which, painful to say, is too common.

The theologian ought, while preparing himself for the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, to consider his task carefully not only from a scientific, but also and chiefly from a moral and religious point of view. He is charged with the duty of interpreting a book, the repository of Divine truth, in which are found many obscure passages. On the success of his labor may depend the faith, the conduct, and salvation of his readers. And while charged with such a weighty responsibility he must keep in mind that he is only a man, subject to all the limitations, passions, and imperfections of humanity. Errors, he knows, are almost inevitable; and every error may be followed by grave consequences. If he gives a too absolute character to occasional precepts, he attributes human thoughts to God. If he forgets the universal and absolute character of Divine teachings, he mutilates the Divine thought, and changes the commandments of God.

Such is the position, such ought to be the mental and moral qualifications of the interpreter of the Holy Scriptures. His task should be begun, continued, and ended with prayer; and it should be conducted with constant vigilance.

Luther said, *Oratio, meditatio, tentatio faciunt theologum.* We say the same. Prayer, study, and experience will aid the interpreter to accomplish his task, so far as it depends upon human ability.

PART SECOND.

GRAMMATICAL HERMENEUTICS.

THE interpreter should begin his work by studying the grammatical sense of the text, with the aid of Sacred Philology. As in all other writings, the *grammatical* sense must be made the starting-point. The meaning of the words must be determined according to the linguistic usage and the connection. The several particulars comprehended under this branch of our subject now require consideration.

I.— DIFFICULTIES.

§ 34. NATURE OF THE TASK.

This task is far from being so easy as it might, at first, appear. To determine, with accuracy, an important, abstract, and complex idea, without other aid than the science of language, is a task the difficulty of which is known only to those who have conscientiously attempted it. This difficulty will be manifest when we consider that the meaning of words is often uncertain, complicated, and vague.

Every dictionary, it is true, professes to give the sense of words. But the interpreter would not be materially aided even by an infallible dictionary, for he needs not the general sense of a word so much as its precise import, with its shades of meaning and its degree of intensity. He is in need of the sense of a word in a given passage, determined, it may be, by a certain occasion,

by certain circumstances of place, and by the individuality of the author. Now this is what is difficult to be determined, and usually difficult in proportion to the importance of the meaning. We deem some illustrations of this difficulty necessary.

§ 35. WANT OF SUFFICIENT ANALOGY BETWEEN LANGUAGES.

There is seldom an identity of sense between the corresponding words of different languages; between the English word, for example, and the corresponding Hebrew word, the Greek word and its representative in Latin, or any other language. This is evident even in regard to words of those languages which are derived the one from the other. "Emperor," "tyrant," "to exterminate," are the literal translations of "Imperator," "τύραννος," and "exterminare," from which they are derived. The distinctions in sense, however, between them and their derivatives are known to all.

We meet with the same thing in the principle theological terms. אֱלֹהִים, Θεὸς, and "God" are far from being expressive of the same idea. אֱלֹהִים is used when speaking of the Being who commands reverence, because He surpasses all others in power and grandeur. The Old Testament employs the term when speaking not only of the true God, but of angels (Ps. viii. 6, etc.), and of magistrates (Ps. lxxxii. 6, etc.) Θεὸς, unlike אֱלֹהִים, etymologically expresses a physical, instead of a moral, idea, and, like it, is not exclusively applied to the true God in the Scriptures.

John x. 34, 35, and 1 Cor. viii. 5, prove this. The references of the first Greek Fathers to the divinity of the Saviour furnish additional proof. Thus Clement of

Alexandria says: (Strom vii.) *τούτῳ πᾶσα ὑποτέτακται στρατιὰ Ἀγγέλων τε καὶ Θεῶν.* To the same effect Origen (Vol. II. in Joh.) developing the idea of *πρωτότοκος* applied to Jesus Christ: *τιμιώτερος τοῖς λοιποῖς παρ᾽ αὐτόν θεοῖς, ὧν ὁ Θεὸς θεός ἐστι, κατὰ τὸ λεγόμενον. Θεὸς θεῶν κύριος ελαλησε,* etc.

As to the English word God—"the Good"—it indicates, without equivocation, the supreme divinity whenever it is not used in accommodation to Pagan theories and to metaphors which owe their origin to them.

§ 36. VARIATIONS IN THE SENSE OF WORDS.

Diversities of sense exist not only between the corresponding words in different languages, but also between the different modes of employing the same words in the same languages, especially in the biblical languages.

1. These variations often pertain to the abstract, vague, or mysterious sense of certain expressions. As examples, we mention *πίστις* and *λόγος*, which we will have occasion to study hereafter. Further examples of this variation may be found in *ψυχή*, which sometimes indicates the life of the body (Luke vi. 9; John xii. 25, etc.), sometimes the seat of the animal appetites (1 Thess. v. 23, etc., comp. James iii. 15), and sometimes the immortal and redeemed soul (James i. 21, v. 20); in *πνεῦμα*, which unites the idea of wind with that of respiration, and especially with that of the principle of spiritual and divine life; in רוּחַ, which combines the different meanings of *πνεῦμα*; in נֶפֶשׁ, which comprises the sense of respiration, of animal life, and of the personal soul.

2. Many words come to express, in consequence of different circumstances, or of etymology, several diverg-

ent ideas. For example, ἄνομος signifies "transgressor of the law" (Acts ii. 23), but ἀνόμως (Rom. ii. 12) "not having received the law"; αὐτάρκεια, "contentment of spirit" (1 Tim. vi. 6) and "sufficiency" (2 Cor. ix. 8); ζῆλος, "zeal" (Rom. x. 2) and "envy" (1 Cor. iii. 3).

3. Others have been modified by shadings of expression, such as hyperboles, emphases, etc., or simply by usage, as ἀδελφός, ἅγιος, which are used to designate Christians.

4. Figures are a fruitful source of new variations, either when the same word is taken sometimes in its proper sense and sometimes in a figurative sense, as ζωή, θάνατος, νήπιος (1 Cor. xiv. 20: Heb. v. 13); θύρα (1 Cor. xvi. 9); or when it is employed in two distinct figurative senses, as γρηγορεῖν and καθεύδειν, used not only in their proper senses "to watch" and "to sleep," but also in those of Christian vigilance and of moral sleep (1 Thess. v. 6), and still further in those of life and death. (Ibid. v. 10).

§ 37. SPECIAL NATURE OF THE LANGUAGES OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

The interpreter of the Holy Scriptures is required, in the prosecution of his work, to translate them from two different languages, one of which belongs to the Semitic family, and the other to the Indo-European. This fact increases the difficulties of his task. The Hebrew varies, according to epochs and localities. The book of Job has a tinge of Arabic. Ezra iv. 8–vi. 18; vii. 12–26; Jerem. x. 11; and Daniel ii. 4–vii. 28, are written in Chaldee. An Aramean element* characterizes the lan-

* The Aramean, one of the three grand divisions of the Semitic languages, comprises two principal subdivisions; viz., the Syriac, or *West Aramean*, and the Chaldee, or *East Aramean*.

guage of some of the later prophets. Moreover, the Hebrew has special difficulties, in the occurrence of a large number of words technically called ἅπαξ λεγόμενα, i. e., words which are found only once.

The Greek of the New Testament consists of different elements, of which we will speak hereafter. It has its idioms; and under a Greek phrase is often concealed a Hebrew turn of thought. Thus the interpreter may be led into error, either by forgetting to take account of these idioms, or by exaggerating their importance. The syntax of the New Testament is often neglected or misapplied by the inaccuracy, literary inexperience, or emotion of the authors, who were inspired men, but ἰδιῶται τῷ λόγῳ (2 Cor. xi. 6).

In short, both sacred books are the work of authors different in position and individuality, from which results the necessity of making a special study of the language and thought of each of them.

There are many circumstances which combine in increasing still further the difficulties, and consequently the importance, of Grammatical Hermeneutics. It is not with dictionaries, formulas, and confessions of faith alone that the interpreter can accomplish his work. He will be successful only with the moral and intellectual qualifications that we have mentioned in Psychological Hermeneutics. To these he must unite the employment of the best methods and all the scientific and philosophical precautions at his command.

II.—RESOURCES AND DUTIES.

§ 38. CONSIDERED GENERALLY.

Although the difficulties attending the task of interpretation are great, they are not insurmountable. There are potent and numerous resources at the command of

the interpreter, for determining the mind of the Spirit. The difficulties themselves become assistants to judicious and active critics by imposing duties upon them. The obstacles in the path of the interpreter cause him to redouble his efforts, collect every possible help, distrust his individual ability, and husband his energies.

More particularly, we observe that Grammatical Hermeneutics furnishes resources and imposes duties, derived from the following sources:

(*a*). From the text itself.

(*b*). From the context.

(*c*). From the parallel texts.

(*d*). From materials foreign to the text.

For the moment we must confine our attention to Grammatical Hermeneutics. However, it should be borne in mind that, even for the simple determination of the sense of words, Historical and Scriptural Hermeneutics are far from being without utility, as we shall see in the sequel.

In developing the subject of Hermeneutics, we are obliged to divide it into successive departments. But in reality, the different elements entering into the interpreter's task mutually act and react and even interpene trate.

SECTION FIRST.

RESOURCES DERIVED FROM THE TEXT.

§ 39. EMPLOYMENT OF THE ORIGINAL TEXTS.

It seems superfluous to affirm that the divine who has undertaken to interpret the Bible, ought to consult habitually the original texts. Nevertheless this practice is neglected by many theologians, even by those who possess sufficient erudition and abundant leisure.

Frequently this neglect is simply a matter of indolence. A large class of thinkers regard the authorized versions of the Scriptures as sufficient. It is a mistake. Even the most accurate of the different translations present the truth in a veiled condition. They can simply approximate, more or less closely, the precision and clearness of the original. Every version leads, sooner or later, into error. The man who reads the original text with attention, with the requisite knowledge and disposition, discovers very frequently some new point of view, some unforeseen intention, some profound and suggestive allusion, some new and precious element in the thought of the sacred author.

This method, moreover, has, in common with all the profounder studies, the immense advantage of giving to the theologian great vividness and freshness of thought, united to the assurance of having successfully accomplished his task. It stimulates the thought, adds pleasure to the intellect, gives veritable delight to the heart, and strengthens faith. All these advantages are more or less denied to the indolent investigator who contents

himself with the ideas sometimes confused, and the beauties always impaired, of the best translations.

In others this negligence is the result of an excessive confidence in a certain justly-esteemed version. But in addition to depriving themselves of the above-mentioned advantages, interpreters of this stamp are exposed to many grievous errors. They are in danger of the mistakes that the most perfect versions present on almost every page, and it is difficult for them to avoid the error of accepting and pressing the significance of the individual words, which can rarely reproduce the original with entire accuracy. Let us notice a few familiar examples.

The German theologians have supported the institution of patronage upon the Mosaic usages, in despite of the documents and facts; doing so simply because Luther translated אֹמֵן (Esther ii. 7), which signifies "a foster parent," by *Vormund*, "a guardian."

A preacher of mature years delivered a discourse upon Ps. xxxix. 5, according to the version of Osterwald, "Thou hast reduced my days to the measure of four fingers," and thought it his duty to explain to his auditory why the psalmist spoke only of four fingers of the hand, saying nothing of the fifth. If he had been conversant with the original, he would have discovered that it was a question not of four different fingers, but of a measure in length (טֶפַח "the palm"), equal to four widths of a finger. The sermon was ridiculous, no doubt, and the preacher devoid of good sense. But the judgment and genius of Saint Augustine have not prevented him from making many mistakes of this character, because he made but little use of the original texts.

The distinction has been made, in the study of the text, between that of the words, that of the constructions, and that of the discourse. The several parts of

this division can not be clearly distinguished, and have the disadvantage of being involved, here and there, in some confusion. Still we will employ this method of division, modifying it as occasion may require. Thus some order will be given to this subject, which has need of arrangement, being in its nature quite vague and minute.

A.—STUDY OF THE WORDS.

§ 40. ORDINARY RESOURCES OF PHILOLOGY.

1. *Grammatical Science.*—This requires no explanation and has no need of development. Let us remark only that an efficient philologist will not be hampered by general rules, but will be competent to derive light from the form of the words and from their intimate nature. The special character of the Greek and Hebrew will afford him much aid. In these languages certain terminations of the adjective distinguish its significance; certain modifications of the substantive vary its meaning. In Hebrew, the vowels or affixes which modify the root so as to make it a substantive, attach to it a nature often very different from the participle or infinitive from which it is derived, and exert an influence upon the concrete or abstract character of the idea which it expresses. These resources, and many others of the same nature, should be used sparingly and wisely, but ought not to be entirely neglected.

2. *Etymology.*—The study of etymology is an attractive resource, sometimes leading to reliable results, but frequently to extravagance. The philologist employing it arrives, or pretends to arrive by the pleasing analysis of etymology, at an unforeseen sense, the discovery of which is its own reward. But this discovery is frequently merely an illusion. It may be affirmed even

that etymological analysis never gives entire certainty. This results necessarily both from the multiplicity of the possible relations between the primitive and the derived senses and from the extravagances of usage. The etymology of ὑπακούω would lead equally to the Greek sense "to obey," and to the English sense "to understand." The derivation of προφητεία would lead one to translate it by "declaration," or "interpretation," rather than by "prophecy"; and in fact it has these two senses in the Scriptures. The undeniable etymology of "extermination" gives the idea of "banishment," which, in fact, is the true significance of extermination. In having recourse to etymology the interpreter ought, therefore, to hedge himself in with precautions, and particularly to impose upon himself the following three rules:

(*a*). Mistrust far-fetched and strained etymologies. An example of relying upon these is found in the case of Augustine, who derived from the Greek πάσχειν, "to suffer," the word "Passover," which comes from a Hebrew word, פֶּסַח, signifying "a passing over."

(*b*). Have recourse to etymology only in default of other resources, or in order to aid these latter in verifying their results.

(*c*). Demand of etymology only the primitive sense, and do not deduce that of the derivatives from it, without at least a complete and rigid examination.

3. *Employment of Cognate Languages.*—The study of classic Greek in relation to the New Testament, and of the different Aramaic and Arabian dialects for the Old Testament, will render important service to the interpreter. It will place in his memory a mass of significations, constructions, phrases, variations, exceptions, and idioms, which will be of great service to him if he can avoid the abuse of them. But let him never make a

parade of his knowledge; let him not seek for the ingenious, the brilliant, and the fresh in preference to the true.

4. *Special Study of the Variations of Sense.*—What we have already said (§ 36) of these variations and the embarrassments they cause to the interpreter, proves sufficiently the special study they require. We will return hereafter to the subject both in Grammatical and in Historical Hermeneuties.

§ 41. STUDY OF THE SPECIAL LANGUAGE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The language of the New Testament is not the Classical Greek. This had its various dialects, of which four have been distinguished. The oldest of these was the Aeolic, which prevailed in Thessaly, Boeotia, Lesbos, and the north-western coasts of Asia Minor. The Doric, which, proceeding from Doris, spread over the greater part of the Peloponnesus, over Italy and Sicily. The Ionic, which was originally spoken in Attica, but was carried thence by colonists to the coasts of Asia Minor. The Attic, which was used in Attica after the emigration of these colonists. This dialect soon excelled all the others in refinement, holding, as it did, a middle place between the harsh roughness of the Doric and the softness of the Ionic.

After the Macedonian conquest, when Greece was deprived of its liberty, and its different States were united under one government, the amalgamation of these dialects, which had previously begun, was completed. In this mixture of dialects that of Macedonia obtained a place, from its being spoken by the people who had acquired the sovereignty. From the amalgamation of these various elements arose the *κοινὴ διάλεκτος*, or

Ελληνική, i. e., the *Common Dialect*, or the *Hellenic*. This dialect is substantially Attic, for the chief characteristics of that dialect remained, notwithstanding the various modifications introduced. The *κοινὴ διάλεκτος* is the usual standard of grammars and lexicons, departures from it being specified under the names of particular dialects.

This *Hellenic Dialect* is the language of the LXX, of nearly all the Apocryphal writings, of the Jewish writers contemporary with the Apostles, and of the New Testament. The special and minute study of it, therefore, is a matter of great importance to the interpreter of that portion of the Sacred Volume.

Some philologists have attempted to dispute this idea of the Greek text, and have claimed that the Apostles employed the purity of the classical language. This is a question of facts and words that we may now regard as decided. The view we have adopted does not deny the correctness or elegance of many passages. But the authors of the New Testament, although differing greatly the one from the other, in regard to the purity of their style, are all more or less subjected to the influences we have just been indicating. It is always impossible to interpret them accurately, if we refuse to take account of these variations. We find in the New Testament a mass of words with meanings foreign to the classical sense; substantives, adjectives, and adverbs irregularly terminated, verbs and names modified in their conjugation or their numbers.

We have seen that the New Testament is Greek, or what has been denominated by grammarians the *κοινὴ διάλεκτος*, or *Ελληνική*. But it has other elements, especially two, which have been called the Hebrew and the Christian.

1. The Hebrew. The Old Testament was the ac-

knowledged code of faith in the infancy of the Hellenistic writers, the pledge and glory of their nationality, and almost the only nourishment of their intellectual life. Its language, although somewhat modified by time, was the mother tongue of most of them. It was most natural for the idioms of their native tongue to leave noticeable impressions upon their writings, and particularly upon the New Testament. Hence we find in this latter a large number of constructions, thoroughly Hebraic, of Greek words employed in an acceptation peculiar to the Hebrew, and of Hebrew words written in Greek letters. The following words are examples of the last-mentioned peculiarity of the New Testament language: *ἀμήν, ἀῤῥαβών, μαμμωνᾶς, σατᾶν, ῥακά.*

2. The Christian. The more perfect revelation of God's will, as given in the New Testament, necessitated a more perfect usage of language. The thought and affections of men were to be drawn into new channels, hence it was necessary for language to follow wherever thought and affection led. Thus resulted the creating of new words, or, more frequently, the giving of new significations to the words then in usage. This powerful influence made itself felt throughout the New Testament and modified, still more, the language of the Greek Fathers. A catalogue of the principal words thus impregnated with Christian thought is subjoined:

Αἰών οὗτος, μέλλων; βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ, τοῦ οὐρανοῦ; δικαιοῦσθαι, δικαιοσύνη; δόξα, δοξάζεσθαι; ζωή, θάνατος, ζωὴ αἰώνιος; καλεῖν, κλῆσις; καταλλάσσειν; κληρονομεῖν, κληρονομία; κόσμος; λόγος; λύτρον, λυτροῦσθαι; μυστήριον; νόμος, ἔργα νομου; παράκλητος; πειρασμός; πίστις; πλήρωμα, πληροῦσθαι; πνευμα, σάρξ; προφήτης, προφητεύειν; σκότος, φῶς; στοιχεῖα; τέκνα, υἱοὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ; υἱὸς του ἀνθρώπου; χάρις, χάρισμα; χρίσμα; ψύχικος.

The domination of the Romans had likewise introduced a number of Latin words into the Greek of the Jews, many of which occur in the New Testament, as *ἀσσάριον, δηνάριον, κεντονρίων, κῆνσος, κοδράντης, λεγεών, μίλιον, μάκελλον, σικάριος, σπεκουλάτωρ,* and many others.

§ 42. RULES AND SUGGESTIONS.

It is easily understood that it is very important for the interpreter to take cognizance of these different elements in the biblical languages. He resembles a blind man walking near a succession of quicksands, unless he possesses a clear insight into these peculiarities, and a thorough knowledge of their nature to serve him as a compass. It is hazardous, and even fatal, to walk at a venture.

The following principles, at once practical and general, should be remembered by the interpreter:

1. The strictly classical interpretations and analogies are to be used with great caution. The interpreter of the New Testament can derive benefit from the profound study of the Greek of Plutarch, Diodorus, Theophrastus, and Lucian; but there is little help to be derived from the more ancient or Attic authors. An acquaintance with their writings certainly will not be useless, and we have already recommended this; but the interpreter should not consult them habitually, nor in preference to the later writers and the authors of the New Testament. He would thus expose himself to the danger of being deceived by false analogies, or allured by that kind of seduction which the classics exercise upon all good philologists.

2. The Old Testament, its spirit and its language, ought always to be present to the thought of the interpreter. In it he will find the greatest number of real

analogies and of useful reconciliations. In it also there are many sources of danger, to which we shall revert hereafter.

3. There should be, above all, a desire in the Christian heart to determine the true and profound sense of the Christian words. Grammatical Hermeneutics is confessedly insufficient for this task. All the portions of the interpreter's labor, that we have mentioned, ought to tend unitedly to this object. But in order to accomplish this labor the interpreter must well know how to determine the sense of the important words of the New Testament, which is not a purely philological task. This can not be accomplished satisfactorily with dictionaries, and by studying Josephus, the Septuagint, or Euripides and Pindar. This is at once an evangelical and philosophical work—a work, in many respects, of religious affection and experience, but which ought to result principally from constant meditation upon the New Testament.

4. The theologian, finally, should acquire the habit of deriving benefit from the recent philological works, which throw light upon the language of the New Testament. The grammars of Winer and Buttmann are valuable, and almost the only complete repertories of its forms and anomalies. The lexicons of Schleusner, Wahl, Bretschneider, Robinson, and Grimm are reliable guides to the interpreter in determining the sense of words. Grammatical commentaries, like those of Meyer and Ellicott, should be consulted with reference to the philological interpretation.

§ 43. DIVERSITY OF LANGUAGE AMONG THE SACRED AUTHORS.

Great importance should be attached, in the act of interpreting, to the fact that there is a diversity of language among the biblical writers. A profound knowl-

edge of grammar and of words is the fundamental element in the art of interpreting. Hence, when the principles of this grammar and the sense of these words come to be modified by individual pens and different modes of thought, it is very necessary to detect and take account of these varying influences. There are several causes of this diversity in the usage of language among the sacred authors.

1. In respect of the Old Testament, the epoch and the place of writing exert a varying tendency. The epoch of Moses, that of David and Solomon, that of the later prophets, and that of the Chaldean or Chaldaizing writers, are distinguished each from the others by the words, the style, and even the grammar. We can not enter into these details, as they belong more properly to the History of the Hebrew language.

2. The diversity of matters treated, and of the kinds of work, exerts a varying influence upon the language. The different kinds of writings (historical, oratorical, didactic, prophetical, practical, etc.) cause the employment of different styles. We shall occupy ourselves with these when developing Historical Hermeneutics.

3. The diversities of the points of view taken by the authors, and of the tendencies of their writings, modify the language employed. We shall treat of these in Scriptural Hermeneutics.

4. The different individualities cause the preference of certain words, the attaching of certain senses to them, and the employment of certain favorite forms and images. Thus are introduced many profound and almost unperceived differences in the language of different writers. These opposite individualities should be made, by the interpreter, the subject of profound study. To understand the importance of this investigation in respect of the Old Testament, it is but necessary to compare, both

for the thought and for the form in which the thought is clothed, Isaiah with Amos, Ezekiel with Micah, Daniel with Ezra, David with Solomon, Moses with Job.

But it is in the New Testament that this fact assumes the greatest importance and demands the most careful attention of the interpreter. St. Paul, St. John, and St. James form, in this respect, three striking individualities, the confounding of which it is necessary to guard against. There are, for example, certain words which appertain more especially to the individuality of each.

John: *ἀγαπᾶν; ἀλήθεια; ἀντίχριστος; ἔρχεσθαι εἰς τὸν κόσμον; θάνατος; ζωή; λογος; λόγος τῆς ζωῆς; μονογενὴς υἱός* etc.

Paul: *ἀποθνήσκειν τίνι; ἀποκαταλλάσσειν; γράμμα* opposed to *πνεῦμα; δικαιοῦσθαι; πνεῦμα δουλειας; μεσίτης; μυστήριον,* the numerous usages of *νόμος,* etc.

James: *ἀκροατής* and *ποιητής; διακρίνω, διακρινομενος; πειρασμός; νόμος βασιλικός; σοφία; ὑπομένω* and *ὑπομονή,* etc.

It may be observed, moreover, that St. John and St. Paul often express identical ideas by different terms. Thus in St. John: *παράκλητος, μένειν ἐν τῷ Θεῷ, γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν,* corresponding to *πνεῦμα ἅγιον, τέκνα τοῦ Θεοῦ* and *καινὴ κτίσις* of St. Paul.

5. Finally, there are sometimes purely linguistic habits which modify the language of the different authors. Thus St. John never employs the optative. St. Paul places *ἄρα* "therefore" at the beginning of the phrase, thus contributing to its being confused with *ἆρα, interrogative.*

B.—STUDY OF THE CONSTRUCTIONS.

§ 44. CONSIDERED GENERALLY.

The profound study of syntax is evidently another fundamental element in the science of interpretation. But syntax itself is subject to variation under diverse influences which will be at once a difficulty and a resource.

These variations may pertain:

1. To the time, the place, the people, or the dialect. These are idioms.

2. To the inaccuracies of language. These are anomalies.

3. To the influences of thought which modify the construction without changing the sense. These are exceptions of form.

4. To the influences of sentiment which modify the sense without changing the construction. These are augmentations of sense.

§ 45. IDIOMS.

The Old Testament presents, in almost every line, constructions peculiar to the Hebrew language. A literal translation could not be made to express the full value of these Hebraisms. The interpreter should study these different idioms separately and carefully.

Frequently, for example, two words are found in juxtaposition which ought to be translated, not by the literal succession of their significations, but by a combination of their meanings. This has been called *Hendiadys* or "one in two" (*ἓν διά δυοῖν*). An example of this is found in 1 Sam. ii. 3: אַל־תַּרְבּוּ תְדַבְּרוּ, which ought to be rendered: "Do not multiply words." The literal

translation, "do not multiply, do not speak," would be meaningless.

Another example. In universal negative propositions the Hebrews prefer to separate the sign of negation from that of universality, instead of uniting them as in the Latin expressions *nullus* and *nemo* and the French *aucun*. Thus Ps. cxliii. 2, לֹא יִצְדַּק לְפָנֶיךָ כָּל־חָי, is literally: "Every one living shall not be justified before Thee," but ought to be translated: "No one living shall be justified before Thee."

The New Testament, on the other hand, has transported a great number of these Hebrew idioms into Greek. The Hebraisms are so frequent in the New Testament, they occupy so important a place there, they modify the sense so noticeably, that the interpreter ought to place great importance upon understanding them correctly.

We have already indicated some Hebrew words which are met with in the New Testament. But the Hebraisms, properly so called, are much more common and consist in expressions, the etymology, the sense, or the construction of which are borrowed from the Hebrew. Thus, for etymology, we might mention *μακροθυμία*, *μακροθυμεῖν* (אֹרֶךְ אַפַּיִם, הַאֲרִיךְ); *ἄρτον φαγεῖν*, in the sense of taking a meal; *δικαιοσύνη*, in the sense of beneficence; *εὐλογία*, in that of liberality. As to constructions, we will indicate the same idioms as in the Hebrew. The hendiadys is frequently met with. An example is found in James iii. 14: *μὴ κατακαυχᾶσθε καὶ ψεύδεσθε*, "do not glory in lying"; literally, "do not glory, do not lie." A hendiadys, still more Hebraic, is found in Luke xxi. 15; *δώσω ὑμῖν στόμα καὶ σοφίαν*: "I will give you mouth and wisdom," for "a mouth full of wisdom." The universal negatives, also, are fre

quently disconnected in the New Testament as in Hebrew. An example is found in John iii. 15: ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων . . . . μὴ ἀπόληται, which should be translated: "In order that no one believing may perish," and not, "in order that every one believing may not perish."

Besides the Hebraisms of this nature, so prominent that no one can overlook them, there are others which exert an influence only upon a shade of expression and thought. The interpreter ought therefore to be attentive to these subtle and often unnoticed relations. He ought to be so well acquainted with the Hebrew that they can not escape his notice. On the other hand, he ought to possess the rare faculty of using without abusing this kind of interpretation. To a critic, with little judgment and experience, partial, and unguarded, the search for Hebraisms may become a mania which twists or mutilates the thought of Revelation.

§ 46. ANOMALIES.

In this paragraph we will pass by the Old Testament in silence. The study of the anomalies of the biblical languages might be applied to it, but in no great measure and without much utility. It is in the New Testament that this study is important and useful. Almost all the New Testament authors were unlettered men, or at least unacquainted with style and grammar. Hence they have not always been able to avoid ambiguities of expression. This may result from an unexpected change of subject, as in Mark ix. 20: ἰδὼν αὐτὸν . . . . καὶ πεσών, where the first participle is connected with Jesus Christ, and the second with the demoniac. Or it may arise from a pronoun being too far removed from its subject, as in Acts iv. 7; αὐτούς is in relation with an-

other *αὐτοὺς* occurring five verses above. Or it may arise from the changing of a direct into an indirect discourse, or inversely, as in John xiii. 29: *ἀγόρασον ὧν χρείαν ἔχομεν . . . . ἢ τοῖς πτωχοις ἵνα τι δῷ.*

Sometimes a substantive is united with an attribute or a verb to which it ought not strictly to be applied, as when Nicodemus said to the Pharisees, John vii. 51: *Μὴ ὁ νόμος ἡμῶν κρίνει τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἐὰν μὴ ἀκούσῃ . . . . καὶ γνῷ τί ποιεῖ.* Another example occurs when Paul rejoices that there has been opened to him a great door *καὶ ἐνεργής* (1 Cor. xvi. 9).

Sometimes a verb is united incorrectly with several nouns, either when the sense may be improper in one of the cases, as 1 Cor. iii. 2: *γάλα ὑμᾶς ἐπότισα καὶ οὐ βρῶμα;* or when it results in a contrary sense, as 1 Tim. iv. 3: *κωλυόντων γαμεῖν, ἀπέχεσθαι βρωματων.*

Very frequently an author adopts, in the close of a sentence, a construction different from that with which he set out. These inaccuracies, which are called anacolutha, are of frequent occurrence in the New Testament. We have an example in Luke xiv. 5: *τίνος υἱὸς ἢ βοῦς . . . . πεσεῖται καὶ οὐκ εὐθέως ἀναστάσει,* etc.

§ 47. EXCEPTIONS OF FORM.

We shall collect in this paragraph several variations of the New Testament writers from the classic Greek, due to the vivacity of the thought.

1. Several instances of want of grammatical agreement occur in the New Testament. These are generally due to a mental substitution by the author of something which is not expressed. An example is found in 2 Cor. v. 19: *κόσμον καταλλάσσων ἑαυτῷ, μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς.* Here there is a want of agreement as to *number* between *κόσμον,* which is used collectively, and

αὐτοῖς. Another instance occurs in Col. ii. 19: οὐ κρατῶν τὴν κεφαλήν, ἐξ οὗ. Here there is a want of agreement as to *gender* between κεφαλην and οὗ. The explanation of this is that Paul employs the real gender in using οὗ instead of the grammatical gender, which would be feminine to agree with κεφαλην.

2. The anacolutha are most frequently due to the vivacity of sentiment. This is evident, for example, in Gal. ii. 6: ἀπὸ τῶν δοκούντων . . . . ἐμοὶ γὰρ οἱ δοκοῦντες.

This is particularly prominent in some of the cases where the recital passes from the indirect to the direct discourse. Thus, in Luke v. 14: παρήγγειλεν αὐτῷ μηδενί εἰπεῖν. ἀλλὰ ἀπελθὼν δεῖξον σεαυτὸν. A similar example is found in Acts i. 4. In these two passages the historian began to recount what Jesus said, and, as if carried away by the vivacity of the recital, finished by reproducing His very words. In Mark xi. 32: ἐὰν . . . . εἴπωμεν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων; εφοβοῦντο τὸν λαόν, the same cause produces an effect directly the reverse, by passing from the direct to the indirect discourse. Instead of reproducing the words probably long and embarrassed, by which the priests, scribes, and elders exposed their danger, the evangelist comes rapidly to the fact. He lays bare the trepidation which concealed itself beneath the phrases, and concludes the matter in three words: "They feared the people."

3. Inversions are almost always the result, and the sign of the movement of the thought. An example is found in Rom. v. 6: ἔτι χριστὸς, ὄντων ἡμῶν ἀσθενῶν, ὑπὲρ ἀσεβῶν ἀπέθανε. This arrangement of the three words ὄντων ἡμῶν ἀσθενῶν permits the writer to express his emotion and his personal gratitude for Christ who came to seek and to save "sinners without strength."

When St. James says (iv. 17): *εἰδότι οὖν καλὸν ποιεῖν καὶ μὴ ποιοῦντι, ἁμαρτία αὐτῷ ἐστίν,* who can fail to understand the intention and the effect of this inversion? Great weight is thus added to the sentence of condemnation by being thus thrown back to the very end of the phrase, after the statement of the sin.

The interpreter should attach great importance to these inversions, since they betray the hidden sentiment of the author. Much care and attention should be expended upon their discovery. A superficial examiner will easily overlook them, since they belong to an elastic language wherein the order of words is not logically determined.

4. Little need be said in respect of the diverse species of *Ellipses*, which are very common in a language so popular and animated as that of the biblical writers. These ellipses result always from the rapidity of the movement, the force or vivacity of the idea, and the instinctive need of sacrificing superfluous words. "Meats for the belly," says Paul (1 Cor. vi. 13), "and the belly for meats." The verb is omitted as unnecessary, and the phrase is thus more vivid and direct. And when he says, in his second epistle to the same church (v. 13), *εἴτε γὰρ ἐξέστημεν Θεῷ. εἴτε σωφρονοῦμεν, ὑμῖν,* no one can fail to perceive the emotion concealed in this rapid and nervous ellipsis.

5. Let us, finally, notice the *paranomasias*. This word is used to designate the resemblances of analogous words as to the sound, and not as to the sense. Such words are often chosen and placed in such a manner as to attract attention and surprise by the contrast between them. Europeans employ the paranomasia (play upon words) only in witty and light literature; but to the Orientals it is a resource of poetry, an arm of eloquence, an index of the profundity of thought and the superior-

ity of the intelligence, an efficient means of surprising the mind or of arousing the imagination.

Paranomasias are frequently met with in the Old Testament, especially in the Prophets. Look, for example, at the first chapter of Micah. They are also encountered in the New Testament, although here they are less common and much less striking. They ought, however, so much the more to fix the attention of the interpreter. The resemblance of the sound in a parallel case has caused more than once the employment of an inexact or uncommon word. There is a case in Rom. i. 31: *ἀσυνέτους, ἀσυνθέτους, ἀστόργους, ἀσπόνδους.*

Two remarkable paranomasias issued from the mouth of our Saviour upon solemn occasions. One occurs in His reply to Peter, Matt. xvi. 18: *σὺ εἶ Πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω,* etc. The other is in Luke xix. 42, when he said to doomed Jerusalem: "Ah! if thou hadst known . . . . the things which pertain to thy peace." These last words are in sad and grave allusion to the name of Jerusalem, which signifies in Hebrew "Habitation of Peace." If it is admitted that our Saviour expressed Himself at this moment as upon ordinary occasions in Aramaic, the paranomasia is complete.

Philip used an elegant and untranslatable paranomasia when he accosted the Eunuch of Candace, Acts viii. 30: *Ἀράγε γινώσκεις ἃ ἀναγινώσκεις.* These words, so concise and abruptly brought together, availed to fix the attention of the pious Ethiopian. They had some influence probably in revealing to him the superior authority of the evangelist, since the proselyte seems to have considered them with respectful and careful attention.

The modifications of sense and of syntax indicated in this paragraph and the one following are of great impor-

tance. In order to interpret correctly, the exegete must comprehend not only the general sense, but also its minor shades of meaning; and must give their true influence to the sentiments as well as to the ideas of the biblical authors.

§ 48. AUGMENTATIONS OF SENSE.

The sentiment of the author, without changing anything in the words, may change their value and impress upon them a force that the interpreter ought not to forget. An example of this is found in *Hyperbole*. This species of figure ought not to be understood beyond the literal sense of the words. It should be regarded only as an index of the difficulty a writer has experienced in finding adequate expressions. The writer, by this figure of speech, reveals the overflow of the sentiment within him. See, for example, in the last verse of the Gospel of St. John, the assertion that the whole world could not contain the books if any one should attempt to recount all the acts of Jesus Christ. The reverse has place in the figure called *Meiosis*, wherein the phrase conveys in reality much more than it seems to express. Thus, in Hebrews xiii. 17, the author, after having recommended his readers to obey their pastors in such a manner as that they may prosecute their ministry with joy and not with grief, adds: "That is unprofitable for you." This evidently signifies, "That is injurious to you."

A touching meiosis may be observed in the exclamation of Paul, Rom. i. 16: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." What Christian heart can fail to divine all that the soul of the Apostle thus expresses of love and holy pride!

A word should be said in conclusion in respect to *Emphasis*, which bears a very close resemblance to mei-

osis. There is an emphasis upon a word when the intention of the author gives to that word a sense more complete and more pronounced than is customary, and, consequently, an extraordinary importance in the phrase. In John ii. 11 the apostle says that after Jesus had wrought the miracle in Cana the disciples *believed* in Him. It is easy to detect that the word ἐπιστεύσαν indicates not a simple belief, which the disciples already had, but a powerful increase of conviction and devotion. In Acts ii. 21 there is another example: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." "To *call*" here signifies quite another thing than a simple appeal from the lips.

The variations to which we have referred in this paragraph are scarcely indicated by the construction. They would, therefore, pertain much more naturally to the following section, where the question of the context will come up.

§ 49. RULES.

The diverse forms and figures which have been discussed in the two preceding paragraphs admit some uncertainty into the sense. They have a tendency, at least, to furnish weapons to the partial and prejudiced interpreter. This authorizes us to give two important rules on this subject—the one negative and the other positive:

1. *Negative Rule.*—Do not regard an expression as figurative without proof, or at least without very strong probability. The most natural, most positive signification ought, other things being equal, to be preferred. It should be borne in mind that when an author changes the accustomed sense of the words he employs, the intention of this change will in some manner be revealed.

2. *Positive Rule.*—The expression may be regarded as

hyperbolical or emphatic, or the ordinary sense may be considered as otherwise modified, when there would result from the literal sense a physical or moral impossibility or a meaning contradicted by the context. Cf. §§ 82–88.

C.—STUDY OF THE PHRASES AND THE DISCOURSE.

§ 50. MODIFICATIONS OF THE GENERAL SENSE OF THE PHRASES.

In this paragraph will be collected certain modifications analogous to the preceding, but exerting a more decisive influence upon the entire passage.

1. There are found in the New Testament, and especially upon the lips of the Saviour, certain concise and sententious phrases which seem to be designed to attract attention by paradox or apparent contradiction. Thus we read in Matt. x. 39: "He that findeth (or saveth) his life shall lose it"; and also in Luke ix. 60: "Let the dead bury their dead."

This form of expression, to which has been given the name of Oxymoron, is to the sense precisely what paranomasia is to the sound. Consequently, the same rules and cautions are to be observed in each case.

2. Irony gives to a phrase a sense directly opposed to that which it appears to have in ordinary conversation. It is often associated with a sentiment of ridicule; but in the Bible, as might be expected, it always expresses an emotion of a more exalted order. In the Scriptures irony almost always expresses the indignation of a virtuous and pious heart, offended by the sight of evil. It is also especially frequent upon the lips of the Saviour when opposing the Pharisees; and St. Paul employs it, when writing to the Corinthians. For example, Jesus

said (Luke xiii. 33): "It can not be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." In 1 Cor. iv. 8, Paul says: "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us," etc.

3. Interrogations do not less clearly modify the sense. They are not always indicated by a change in the construction. Taking James ii. 21, without the context, it would be absolutely impossible to decide whether the sacred author affirms or denies justification by works. If the phrase were positive it would deny the doctrine; but the context shows that it is interrogative, and that it affirms justification by faith made manifest by works. To know whether a phrase is interrogative or not is one of those problems which become very embarrassing to the interpreter of the New Testament. The easy and frequent confusion of imperatives and indicatives throws him into analogous difficulties.

Every conscientious interpreter will understand the necessity of being carefully assured of the true sense in such a case. Equally plain is the importance of a diligent examination before admitting a given phrase to be a case of irony or an interrogation, where a positive interpretation would give an opposite sense. The benefit of the doubt must be given to the positive interpretation.

SECTION SECOND.

RESOURCES DERIVED FROM THE CONTEXT.

§ 51. CONSIDERED GENERALLY.

THE study of the context is the most legitimate, efficacious, and trustworthy resource at the command of the interpreter. Nothing can be more convenient, more logical, than to explain an author by himself, and to have recourse to the entire train of thought. It is much less easy for sophism to abuse this mode of interpretation than that of dealing with etymology, philology, and exceptions of syntax. In fact, the cases wherein the study of the context leads to error are so rare that it is justly placed at the head of the means to which the interpreter should have recourse. It is of the greatest necessity in the interpretation of the whole Bible, since the antique and popular character of its writings brings with it many obscurities. Especially is it important to the understanding of the epistles of Paul, wherein the thought, sometimes breaking the phrase by its energy, remains embarrassed and, as it were, smothered beneath the *débris*.

The study of the context pertains, at once, to Grammatical and to Scriptural Hermeneutics. We speak of it here rather than in the sequel, because it is an indispensable and inseparable complement of the preceding section.

The benefits derived from the study of the context may be grouped under a few principal heads.

§ 52. DETERMINATION OF VAGUE WORDS AND OF VARIABLE SENSES.

Already have been noticed the numerous and grave difficulties that words of vague meaning impose upon the interpreter. The study of the context is not only the best, but almost the only, means of certainty in such cases.

A few examples may be given. The word *ψύχη* has been mentioned (§ 36) as having, in the New Testament, three very distinct senses: (*a*) the life of the body, (*b*) the seat of the passions, (*c*) the responsible soul or immortal personality. Each time this word is employed, the context informs us, almost unquestionably, which of the senses ought to be preferred. Thus in Matt. vi. 25, *ψύχη* makes an antithesis to *τροφή*, similar to that between *σῶμα* and *ἔνδυμα*. The symmetry of these antitheses demonstrates that the life of the body is here the true sense.

Βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν in Matt. v. 10, necessarily signifies *eternal life*, since the kingdom of heaven is promised in this passage to those who are persecuted upon earth; but in Matt. xiii. 24, being compared to a field where the tares remain mixed with the wheat until the harvest, the phrase must signify the universal visible church.

In order to understand better the great utility of the context, as to the determination of the sense of vague or variable words, let us proceed to study in detail the principal biblical meanings of an important word, which has been the occasion of many disputes and misconceptions.

Πίστις, "faith," ordinarily expresses in the orthodox symbols an idea at once complex, formulated, and in-

variable. In the New Testament, on the contrary, the word answers to the various developments of one fundamental idea—that of religious persuasion. The context alone can, and does, inform us of the shades of sentiment or the diverse convictions which should be added to the primitive sense.

It will not be necessary to examine those passages, such as Rom. x. 8, and Jude 3, where the word πίστις is employed by ellipsis in the objective sense to signify the *object of faith.* These very rare passages may be determined by the context as well as the others; but we are now concerned with the idea of subjective faith, taken in its proper sense.

In Rom. xiv. 23 occurs this passage: "Whatsoever is not ἐκ πίστεως is sin." The formulated interpretation of this passage has formerly been that every work which was not performed by a Christian possessed of saving faith was sinful: as, for example, the good deeds of pagans; *splendida peccata*, as Augustine calls them. But this interpretation is incompatible with the context. The reading of the whole verse renders it certain that the sense of πίστις here is the element in which the Christian lives and moves, conscientious, religious persuasion.

In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews the sacred author extols the faith of the ancient patriarchs. The dogmatic conclusion, in the minds of some, is that these men possessed a complete faith in the Saviour, and a distinct knowledge of redemption, without which they could not be saved. The faithful study of the context, however, shows that faith in this passage is used in an entirely different sense. In the first verse he defines faith, in its most abstract sense, as belief in the invisible. In the third verse he makes an application which is incompatible with the dogmatic interpretation we have

mentioned; and in the sixth verse he develops and applies the idea of faith we have advocated. Hence results the complete demonstration that, in this whole passage, *πίστις* indicates a religious belief in the existence and perfections of an invisible God, the profound conviction of the dependence of man upon Him, and the hope of receiving His rewards.

James (i. 6) commands us to ask wisdom from God *ἐν πίστει*, the necessary condition of obtaining it. A strict interpretation of this passage has been given, which teaches that it is necessary to possess a firm faith in all the fundamental doctrines of Scripture in order to obtain the help of God. But the latter part of this verse and the eighth verse demonstrate that, in this passage, *πίστις* is opposed to doubt and inconstancy of purpose. It signifies a religious belief of the heart and the will, full of energy, confidence, and ardent desire.

In Rom. xii. 3, Paul recommends to the faithful to entertain modest sentiments proportionate to the "measure of faith" (*μέτρον πίστεως*) that God has given to each. Some may conclude that the believer to whom God has given a more complete faith is less bound by these sentiments of modesty, *σωφρονεῖν*; but the context contradicts this interpretation. Verses 4–8 demonstrate that the apostle has in his mind the special capacities of each in reference to the functions of the church. The modesty he recommends consists in not aspiring to those offices for which they have no divinely bestowed aptitude. Faith in this passage indicates a Christian belief, acting outwardly and manifesting itself objectively by evangelical words and in ecclesiastical functions. "It is the subjective condition (the objective is the divine *χάρις*) of that which every one can and ought to do in the Christian life of the Church" (Meyer).

In Rom. iii. 28, Paul states the conclusion of an extended argument for justification by faith. The context determines the thought of the apostle. The fundamental idea of religious belief is, in the accompanying verses, completed and determined by several new elements. The 21st verse places this faith in opposition to the law. The 23d verse presents it as necessitated by the sin of man, and in verses 22, 25, and 26, it appears as the means of pardon—a means at once necessary to man and desired by God. Verse 25, moreover, attaches faith and the pardon it procures to the death of Christ as an expiatory sacrifice. Combining now these diverse elements, we recognize that in this important declaration the apostle takes πίστις in the sense of a religious belief accompanied by a fervent reliance upon Christ and by the natural effects of this reliance, which are twofold: (*a*) The conviction of our sins, (*b*) The firm hope of pardon procured by the sacrifice of Christ.

In Gal. ii. 20, faith is presented (1) as a religious belief which has incorporated itself in the life, which has even become the life of the soul; (2) as producing in the heart of the believer an entire self-abdication and an intimate union with Christ; (3) as springing from the contemplation of the love of Christ and of His sacrifice.

§ 53. DETERMINATION OF THE LOCAL AND GENERAL SENSES.

The importance of comprehending the sentiments, as well as the thoughts, of an author has been mentioned in Psychological Hermeneutics. The various emotions determine the choice and order of the thoughts, modify the forms of expression, and deeply mark every phrase with their impress.

The study of the sentiments is particularly essential

to the understanding of Paul's writings. The emotions of the apostle exert a strong influence upon his epistles, disuniting the phrases, disturbing the deductions, and obscuring the connection between the ideas. When writing to the Corinthians or to the Galatians, he wishes to conceal the grief or indignation with which he is moved and endeavors to follow a series of ideas regularly and logically connected. But this attempt at calm and coherent reasoning conceals a profound emotion which, discovering itself here and there, bewilders the reader, changes the tone of the discourse, and intermingles doctrinal instruction with sorrowful and sublime cries of the heart. In his calmest writings Paul is agitated by the abundance and persistence of his ideas, which, breaking through the form of words, burden his epistles with digressions and parentheses; without ever doing injury, however, to the fundamental order, to which the author always returns.

When a person speaks or writes out of the abundance of a moved heart, it is necessary to pay special attention to the prompting motives in order to understand him. Hence the interpreter should form the habit of detecting quickly and analyzing closely the affections and emotions which excite or modify the writings upon which he is engaged.

These observations are preliminary to the main thought of this paragraph, which is, that the context is the best means of giving method and clearness to this study. All the details necessary to the discovery of the motives of an author may, in many cases, be found in the context. Studying the context will, therefore, reveal the local sentiment of the phrase or word upon which the interpreter is engaged.

But it will still be necessary, always by the aid of the context, to ascend from the local to the general senti-

ment of the passage or book. Every book has a prompting motive for its existence, and of this motive the interpreter ought to have a clear and positive knowledge, founded on an analysis of the facts. The courts consider that an action is not clearly and correctly understood until the motives originating it have been carefully studied. The general sentiment of a book reveals to us the motive of its publication, and therefore the interpreter's task is not performed until he has found this sentiment, by examining the local and general context.

§ 54. DETERMINATION OF OBSCURE PHRASES.

Obscurities of sense arise either from peculiarities of idiom, or from irregular constructions, or from modifications in the form of words and phrases. The context is often the only means at the disposal of the interpreter of throwing light upon these perplexing passages.

A few examples of the utility of the context in solving these difficulties will be given :

1. Phrases which are obscure because of their construction or their conciseness.

Such phrases are often explained or developed by the context in such a manner as to remove their obscurity, as in John xvi. 8, which is developed in the succeeding verses. Frequently the context contains repetitions, oppositions, symmetrical and parallel expressions, which suffice to remove the difficulties. The vague and almost surprising expression, *ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν*, John iii. 21, is made plain by the antithesis in verse 20, *ὁ φαῦλα πράσσων*. It is thus found to signify the one who lives in a religious and Christian manner, and not the one who merely accepts the truth. The parallelism of the Hebrew poets constantly renders this service to interpretation. Another example is found in Matt. xxiii. 9, "Call

no man your father upon the earth." The preceding and succeeding verses show that he spoke not of the fathers according to the flesh, but of the habit of giving this honorary title to the doctors of the law.

The two noticeable propositions in Phil. ii. 12, 13: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," and: "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure," have given rise to many false interpretations. They would even appear contradictory if they were separated. But united as they are, and being made reciprocally the context, they are mutually limited, explained, and built into one important truth. The same is true of watching and prayer in the discourses of our Saviour. Often the principle or the consequence of an obscure proposition is found in the context, and thus the doubtful passage is elucidated. Thus in 1 John iv. 1: the apostle recommends to "try the spirits" to see if they come from God, which might surprise us; but the latter part of this verse gives us the motive, the two following verses the means, and we discover that he speaks of false prophets.

2. Phrases which are obscure because of those modifications of sense which do not change, or which but slightly change, the construction and words.

In a great number of cases the context is the only means of ascertaining whether the phrase is ironical or positive, interrogative or affirmative, imperative or indicative, figurative or simple, relative or absolute. The twenty-second chapter of 1 Kings places, in the presence of two kings, the true and false prophets in a manner as dramatic as it is interesting and instructive. The flattering promise made by the prophet of the Most High (verse 15) seems to contradict the entire passage; but the 16th verse shows us that it was ironical, since the King of Israel himself understood it thus. Is ἐρεννᾶτε,

in John v. 39, an imperative or an indicative? Does Jesus say to the Jews: "Ye search the Scriptures," or does He command them so to do? This last sense is much more probable, since in the verses preceding and succeeding our Saviour reproaches His auditors for their evil intentions and unbelief. In James ii. 4, the words οὐ διεκρίθητε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς have the air of a negation: "Ye do not make a difference among yourselves." The context, however, proves that they are interrogative, and that they affirm instead of deny. "Do ye not make a difference, etc.?" The writer goes on to give the proof of the fact that his readers made "differences" among themselves, and the latter part of the verse confirms the reproach by an analogous and parallel reproach.

Those words in Titus i. 15: "To the pure all things are pure," appear at first sight to be in contradiction to Christian morality, and have given rise to many absurd interpretations. The 14th verse is sufficient to show that this proposition refers only to human ordinances. In Luke xxi. 15, Jesus promised to inspire with fullness of wisdom. To whom did He promise? The context shows that He addressed himself only to His disciples, and that His promise had reference entirely to the persecutions which menaced them. This 15th verse is placed in the center of a long passage (verses 6–36), where the near sufferings of believers are announced, and in connection with three verses where the theme is of the persecuting tribunals and of the conduct to be observed before them. The context similarly proves the relative character of the analogous promise in John xvi. 13.

§ 55. FAULTS OF INTERPRETERS WITH REFERENCE TO THE CONTEXT.

In the employment of the context as a means of interpretation, two errors have been committed, the one through negligence, and the other through exaggeration.

1. *Negligence.*—The context, the natural and logical resource of the interpreter, has neither been sufficiently appreciated nor employed. This help, although being of great use, possesses no especial attraction to certain minds, since it does not conduct to brilliant and unlooked-for results. Other resources, such as the parallels, the etymology, and the archæology, are very frequently preferred, as affording scope for ingenuity.

2. *Exaggeration.*—Sometimes, on the other hand, too much importance has been given to the context. Generally the dogmatical school has fallen into the error of negligence, while exaggeration is predicable of the rationalistic school. The influence of the context in revealing the true sense is evidently proportionate to the harmony of ideas throughout the whole passage. The extent of this harmony, however, changes according to the nature of the writings, and frequently according to the character of the authors. The context is neither so connected nor so extended in a poetical, historical, or sententious, as in a didactic or oratorical passage. What context, other than the parallelism, is there from the tenth to the twenty-ninth chapter of Proverbs? The One-hundred-and-nineteenth Psalm, being purely alphabetical, presents as little context. It would therefore be absurd to proceed in the interpretation of this Psalm, as in that of the Fiftieth Psalm, which forms a complete whole, carefully elaborated and closely united. In the Prophets context is often evident and important, but of no great extent. The specialties, the variations, the

sudden transitions peculiar to the prophetical writings, render the employment of the context much less useful there than elsewhere.

This is where the rationalistic interpreters have erred, when they have contested, in particular, the Messianic sense of the prophetical writings, and their predictive sense in general. Reasoning as they have been accustomed to do in the didactic works, they have denied the Messianic sense, even the evident oracles, because the preceding verses were engaged with other subjects. This is a pure *petitio principii*. They have denied the prophecy because they did not discover in it the characteristics which they preconceived to be necessary to a prophecy.

§ 56. DUTY OF THE INTERPRETER IN REFERENCE TO THE CONTEXT.

The interpreter who wishes to explain a word or phrase by the aid of the context, should first of all determine the limits of that context. He should endeavor to comprehend the full sense and the general bond of union of the passage, seeking not the brilliant and ingenious interpretation, but the correct sense and the natural connection.

This done, he will still be cautious, remembering that he may have arrived only at a probability of truth. In order to verify his conclusions he should repeat his labor, weighing each word, comparing the several details, taking account of the preference given by the author to each expression and each figure, until a complete harmony has been established between the different elements of the context and the context itself, between the context and the text, between the lesser parts and the whole. The conclusions thus attained should be further verified by an appeal to the other resources of Hermeneutics.

SECTION THIRD.

RESOURCES DERIVED FROM PARALLEL TEXTS.

§ 57. DISTINCTIONS.

THE employment of this means of interpretation has given rise to great confusion and many misconceptions. A few distinctions will be necessary to warn the interpreter against falling into these errors.

In order to explain an obscure passage, it has been judged convenient to compare the parallel—*i. e.*, resembling, analogous, or symmetrical—passages. This resource is at once natural, seductive, and of easy usage; and often of great advantage.

There are two very different tasks for this resource to perform, which should not be confounded. The comparison of parallels has a two-fold object, (*a*) to explain an obscure or unknown word, (*b*) to determine the correct interpretation of a vague or contested idea. In the first case the other uses of the same word should be sought; in the second instance, the other expressions of the same idea. In the first case a parallel of words is obtained, but in the second a parallel of ideas. These are distinct resources which differ in object, method, and rules. The confounding of these two instruments exposes the interpreter to obvious errors, which have not always been avoided. The parallels of words pertain to Grammatical Hermeneutics. The parallels of ideas belong to Scriptural Hermeneutics, and should be investigated there.

In order to make this distinction better understood

we will adduce an example which combines in one word the two kinds of parallels. This may be found in the word *οὐρανοί* which, in the plural number, is frequently found in the New Testament. In order to ascertain the literal sense of this word and to explain its plural usage, appeal must be made to the parallelism of words. Reference may be first made to the Hebrew שָׁמַיִם, and thus the conclusion is reached that the plural usage of *οὐρανοί* is a Hebraism. Referring next to Eph. iv. 10, where the ascension of Jesus is described, *ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν* we find that the plural designates merely the heaven of nature.

But in order to determine the Christian idea to be attached to this word, appeal must be made to the parallels of ideas. In Matt. xix. 24, and elsewhere, we find *βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν* made synonymous with *βασιλεία του Θεοῦ*, and we often see these two modes of expression substituted the one for the other. In Matt. xiii. 43, we have another expression, as the context clearly shows, of the same idea: *βασιλεία τοῦ πατρὸς*. From the comparison of these different passages the conclusion is clearly drawn that *οὐρανοί*, at the same time that it indicates the heaven of nature, expresses by the association of ideas, the abode of the redeemed after death. This idea is further confirmed by Col. i. 5, where is mentioned the hope which is reserved for us *ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς*, and by a great number of other parallel passages.

If any one should confound these two orders of parallels, employ them indifferently, or cease to take due account of the diversity of their nature and object, he would arrive at very grave misconceptions. By mistaking the parallelism of words for that of ideas, he would conclude that Jesus has gone above the abode of the redeemed and the throne of God. On the other hand, by mistaking the parallelism of ideas for that of words, he

would be convinced that οὐρανοί is a name of God. The mistake in this case is little to be feared, since it would be so apparent; but when the error is less noticeable there is great danger of being deceived.

In reference to the parallels of words, there is still another distinction as to nature and method, which gives rise to a special division of some importance.

(*a*). The parallels of words, properly so called, consists, as we have seen, of different passages wherein the same word occurs. Thus a series of contexts is obtained to the same word, and by a comparison of these its true meaning may be ascertained.

(*b*). There are, also, certain parallels of words which are really parallels of phrases. These consist of different passages containing the same phrase, or at least the same recital; but with this important difference, that the word which is obscure in one passage is displaced in the other by a synonym which explains it.

To these two categories let us briefly attend.

§ 58. PARALLELS OF WORDS.

1. Properly so called. The manner of using the real parallels of words has already been indicated. The different passages in which the obscure word occurs are compared, giving prominence to the most important, and valuing highly those which are most related to the special object in hand. From this discriminating comparison the unknown sense is derived. When the passages, thus compared, are closely connected by being written in the same epoch, or by authors of analogous modes of thought, or by occurring in books of the same general nature, the *local* sense of the word will be determined. When, on the contrary, the passages are dissociated in the same respects, the *general* sense only can be obtained with certainty.

Sometimes the contexts of the passages thus compared do not give the same sense to the obscure word. This has been exemplified in the analysis made above of the idea of *πίστις*. But in such a case the object is only better attained; for not only is the literal meaning of the word determined, but the student has also discovered its different modifications and biblical applications.

The intimate connection between the employment of the context and that of the parallels is evident. The collating of parallel texts is really the collection of as many contexts, since each text should be studied with reference to its companion texts.

2. Parallels, improperly so called, or parallels of phrases. These will be best explained by a few examples. In the enumeration of the chief officers of David's court (2 Sam. viii. 18) it is said that his sons were כֹּהֲנִים, which signifies "priests." The employment of this word in speaking of the princes of Judah seems anomalous, or rather in complete contradiction to the whole life of David as well as to the Law. It is a historic impossibility. Referring to 1 Chron. xviii. 17, we find the same recital, the same enumeration, and the same phrase; excepting that רִאשֹׁנִים "chiefs," is substituted for the obscure word mentioned above. We are authorized, therefore, to conclude that the author of the Chronicles recognized in כֹּהֲנִים a variable and general sense, from which the signification of "chiefs" or "princes" may be derived, as well as that of "priests." In Mark xi. 8 it is recorded that the multitude cast off *στιβάδας*, when Jesus was riding triumphantly to Jerusalem, and strewed the route along which He was to pass. This word is an *ἅπαξ λεγ.*,—*i.e.*, found in no other passage of the New Testament. By a reference, however, to Matt. xxi. 8,

an explanation is found, for here the word κλάδους "branches" is substituted for it in the same phrase.

Great care should be exercised in the use of parallel phrases, since it is not always certain that, in spite of the close resemblance between two related phrases, the thought of the two writers is identical.

SECTION FOURTH.

RESOURCES FOREIGN TO THE TEXT.

§ 59. GENERAL SUGGESTIONS.

THERE are many subsidiary helps, such as books and special treatises, which are of great value to the interpreter. However, as these pertain rather to theological Methodology they should not be dwelt upon minutely here. Our subject embraces the principles of interpretation, but not the process of exegesis. Still, a few practical suggestions will be in place, in reference to the philological resources which penetrate somewhat into the science of interpretation.

These may be classified in two principal categories:

1. Those which are occupied with the languages of the Sacred Books, such as the grammars and lexicons. We have already referred to the works of this character which treat especially of the language of the New Testament. A constant reference to these instruments is necessary in every profound study of the Bible.

2. Those which are occupied not with the languages in general, but with the special sense of a given word or phrase. Examples of these may be found in the versions and paraphrases of, and the commentaries upon, the Holy Scriptures.

The use of these instruments should become more general among the theologians of our country. The possession of a well-selected library is a duty in their position and profession, as much so as that of the anvil to the smith, or the spade to the laborer. In this we

would do well to learn from the German students, who, however straitened in circumstances, do not imagine that they can succeed without a well-filled and well-used library. A clergyman in German lands, who possesses no books, who does not read the religious publications of the day, falls irretrievably in the consideration of his flock and of the outside world. The same must be the case with theologians of all lands. Never were force of thought and independent meditation so much needed as at the present day. Communion with the master minds on biblical subjects is a great incentive to individual thought.

§ 60. A CHOICE TO BE MADE.

This choice is important, for the instruments, particularly of the second category, are innumerable, and it is essential to study only the best productions. All have their special tendencies, their peculiar qualities, and their individual faults. There are many which are dangerous and deluding guides to the student. The evident necessity of the choice renders necessary certain suggestions of practical value.

1. It is proper to consult at once the opposite tendencies, and the different schools. It is of advantage to compare the literal and the free versions; the erudite, the logical, and æsthetic commentaries; the rationalists and the supernaturalists; the able exegetes and the pious paraphrasts; the philological and theological interpreters. If one has the good fortune to find an instrument which combines the different tendencies as well as the opposite methods, and conciliates them with just criticism and true faith—it is priceless, but it is rare. From a purely philological point of view, the lexicons of Gesenius render this service to the Hebrew.

2. In each of those tendencies and schools it is neces-

sary to study the works of the greatest ability and insight. There is not time to peruse all, and when one is penetrating an unknown country he has need of sure guides. It is necessary to leave to scholars and to the great libraries mediocre books, works of no special merit, eccentric productions, and authors who aspire more to astonish than to enlighten. All these avail merely to mislead the beginner, to distract his studies, and to exhaust his precious time without fruit.

3. The interpreter should prefer, other things being equal, the special treatises, and, above all, the monographs, which are always more complete and more profound than general works, because they have absorbed more interest and more time. Even mediocre men sometimes produce remarkable monographs. Exegetical theology already possesses special treatises upon the more important portions of the Bible.

Much diversity may be found frequently in the different portions of the same work. One chapter may compare unfavorably with another, as to logic, ardor, and finish. Scope for judicious selection is therefore furnished within the pages of a single volume.

4. Finally, the student should limit himself to a small number of books, at least at the beginning.

He who grasps too much in his arms binds the bundle but poorly. The library of students ought to resemble the house of Socrates—small, but full of true friends.

§ 61. USE TO BE MADE.

In order to make a good use of the resources which the interpreter has placed in his library, he should first of all know them well, and then employ them wisely.

1. The preliminary labor of studying them carefully is necessary in order to be aided by their merits, and to

avoid their faults. In the works of great extent (as the commentaries upon a prominent portion of the Bible) it is particularly necessary to distinguish between the parts that have been carefully prepared and those that have been neglected.

It may be further suggested that an examination of some important portions of a work will be sufficient to reveal the character of the whole. The method and the principles of a commentary may be ascertained by the study of its treatment of certain obscure and contested passages. The preface reveals to experienced observers the spirit of an author and his religious tendency. It has often been observed that rationalistic theologians, in their prefaces, seem uniformly preoccupied with literary success, and the supernaturalists with the interests of the faith. Thus it is that ordinarily the reader may be assured of their principles even before reading anything of the remainder. This first provisional criterion rarely deceives as to the direction and character of the writer.

2. The wise employment of the hermeneutical instruments in one's possession is the next step, and seems to demand the union of three elements:

(*a*). It is necessary to employ them in such a manner as to utilize the special advantages of each instrument, and not to be tainted by its faults.

(*b*). The interpreter should use them so as to make his own thought independent and his investigation critical, rather than to obtain in detail the results all prepared. In order to accomplish this, special attention should be given to each author's methods, principles, and judgment, rather than to the particular solutions given as examples.

(*c*). The student should bear in mind that the object of reading is to stimulate and enlighten his own intelligence, so that his further investigations may be reliable.

His object should be to understand the Bible, and not the commentaries. The passage or text should be studied first in the Bible and then in the commentary; and thus the spontaneous sagacity of each man's mind will be preserved.

Such are the principal topics to be noticed under Grammatical Hermeneutics. The resources mentioned are fundamental; for the words of the text are the object of interpretation; and the knowledge of the language is the necessary means. However, all the elements of successful interpretation are not yet obtained.

PART THIRD.

HISTORICAL HERMENEUTICS.—Introduction.

§ 62. DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

The name of Historical Hermeneutics is given to the whole of the resources derived from the study of the historical circumstances which have exerted an influence upon the production of the work and upon the individuality of the author.

It will be granted that the writers of the different biblical books preserve their individual style of expression and modes of thought. It is perfectly evident, moreover, that the object of a book, the persons to whom it is addressed, the time and place wherein it was composed, and the circumstances which determined the choice of these persons, should exert much influence upon the choice of ideas, upon the sense attached to the particular words, and upon the relative character of the truth imparted.

It can not be seriously denied that the education of an author, his profession, his times, and his nationality would influence his language, expressions, illustrations, and manner of conceiving and imparting truth. The same word does not correspond exactly and in all cases to the same idea or collection of ideas in Moses and Solomon, in Matthew and John, or in John and James. There is an intellectual sphere peculiar to each author, which is still further modified according to circumstances.

It is impossible to interpret wisely and completely

without having investigated this sphere with attention and study as thoroughly as one mind is capable of treading on the domain ruled by another. The task in this Third Part, therefore, consists in investigating the nature of the circumstances which modify the individuality of the sacred authors. The investigation will proceed from the center outward, beginning with that which is personal to the author, and ending with that which we shall find of a more general character in the writings.

Four different orders of circumstances are to be studied in as many sections:

1. Circumstances personal to the author.
2. Social circumstances in which he was placed.
3. The philological habits that this position imposed upon him.
4. Circumstances foreign to the author, but which have determined the production of his writings.

SECTION FIRST.

PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AUTHOR.

§ 63. EDUCATION AND PROFESSION.

THE circumstances which surround the child are always of much importance in his gradual development, and are recognizable in the character of the man. Whether they inspire or debilitate him, they leave an impress upon his ideas, trains of thought, and modes of expression. Augustine and Schleiermacher can not be adequately understood without taking into account the holy mother of the former and the Moravian education of the latter. The influence of the same causes is discernible in the inspired authors. No one can fail to discover in Paul the man reared in the school of the Pharisees and trained at the feet of Gamaliel. The Psalms, which are the work of David, are often recognizable by the tender admiration of nature with which the youthful shepherd was filled when he kept his father's flocks on the plains of Bethlehem.

A man's profession is simply a continued education, completing or modifying the first and exerting a powerful influence upon the man, his manners, and his language. It is sufficient to name the mariner, the soldier, the merchant, the laborer, the clergyman, and the lawyer, in order to call to mind as many different types of men, each having his habitual tone, his familiar expressions, his peculiar images, his favorite point of viewing every subject—in a word, his special nature. The student should expect, therefore, to find something resem-

bling this in the Bible, and be able to derive therefrom some facility in understanding the sacred authors. No interpreter worthy of the name can fail to remark the rustic images of the shepherd Amos or the sacerdotal coloring of the last chapters of Ezekiel. David—successively shepherd, captain, and king—has sown his Psalms with images borrowed from nature and from battles. His son Solomon betrays in his Proverbs the refined and spiritual observation of the crowned philosopher, who, living in a more peaceful and more advanced civilization, looks upon society from a serene height. No intelligent observer can fail to detect the professional scribe in the recitals and compilations of Ezra, and in the book of Nehemiah, the patriot magistrate and skilled administrator.

§ 64. DEGREE OF INSTRUCTION AND OF NATURAL INTELLIGENCE.

Notwithstanding the infallibility of wisdom assured by the Holy Spirit to the sacred authors, their natural traits assert their influence on their writings. Some had a more extensive share of knowledge, others an experience more varied; some possessed faculties of greater vigor, others powers of wider generalization—and these diversities could not fail to exert an influence on the form in which divine truth is conveyed. The degree of the intellectual development of each author is therefore an important fact for the interpreter, who will constantly have occasion to notice its effects. Moses—reared by scholars in a palace and "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians"—was a chosen instrument to give to the Hebrews the legislation which should govern them. The knowledge of Egyptian arts, laws, and morals is betrayed in many of his passages, in spite of

the salutary transformation that the divine thought caused them to undergo. Among the New Testament writers, Luke allows his literary habits to appear in his prologue and dedication. The discourse of Paul to the Athenians supposes some knowledge of the wisdom and books of the Greeks at the same time that they reveal the impress of an elevated imagination and a generalizing mind. It would be impossible to suppose that this discourse issued from the lips of Peter. The natural qualities of James' mind were profundity and meditation. They all have their favorite language and figures, which do not permit them to be confounded with classical authors or professional philologists.

The interpreter must be able to avail himself of these peculiarities in the natural thought of the sacred authors. He should expect a logical and regular method in the epistles of Paul. He should demand of James only an underlying connection of ideas, and of Peter only the animated utterances of an impulsive soul.

§ 65. MORAL CHARACTER.

The heart as well as the mind of man is reflected in his writings. A profound study of, and close sympathy with, the moral character of an author are therefore necessary to every successful interpreter. In order to attain this sympathy, it is necessary to become conversant with the history of each author's experience and affections. Unfortunately for the interpreters of the Bible, the history left us in regard to the sacred authors is very meagre. Only slight hints are possessed by us in reference to Ezekiel, Isaiah, Matthew, and even John. This deficiency in historical knowledge of the sacred authors must and may be supplied, in some measure at least, by the writings themselves. Studied with atten

tion, and with reference to the investigation desired, they enable us to discover the moral as well as the intellectual characteristics of the men imperfectly known from history. No attentive reader of Isaiah and of John can arise from the perusal of their writings without a definite idea of their emotional character.

It is not an *argumentum in circulo* to appeal to a book in order to discover the intellectual and moral characteristics of an author, and then to explain the book by these characteristics. For in the one case we appeal to the writing as a *whole*, and in the other case we apply the general notions thus obtained to the elucidation of the *details* of the work. This subject is therefore one ramification of the study and value of the context.

The key to the book of Deuteronomy is found in the patriotic ardor of Moses, in the consciousness of his mission, and in his constant solicitude as to its issue. This is the explanation of this strange and magnificent book—a book of contrasts and patriotic emotions, of the last farewell of a loving, anxious, and forgiving father to his ungrateful and fickle sons. No one can fail to discover the moral character of David in his Psalms of lamentation, which always begin with the groanings of a grief without hope and end with the transports of a filial confidence. Emptied of pride by suffering, the poet-king turns himself to the Lord, and the remembrance of His many kindnesses, the belief in His constant presence and tender forgiveness, gradually transform the bitterness of his soul into resignation, love, and holy joy.

A merely philological interpretation of Paul's writings can never reveal the true force and beauty of his emotional, vigorous, and yet logical compositions. It is particularly true of his epistles, as of all the sacred books, that an understanding of the moral character of the author is an important means of their interpretation.

SECTION SECOND.

SOCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AUTHOR.

THESE comprehend all the social surroundings of, and influences exerted upon, the author, which are not peculiar to him as a man, but participated in by his contemporaries also. Those which most readily influence a writer will be indicated. Then we will examine successively the effects which these circumstances produce, the means to be employed, and the precautions to be observed, in order to appreciate their influence aright.

I. NATURE OF THE SOCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

§ 66. GEOGRAPHICAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

The geography of a country often exerts an indirect influence upon language. Habits of a peculiar nature are formed by the climatic circumstances, and habits modify the thought of a writer, and hence his language. The interpreter, therefore, ought to be able to recognize and take account of the impression left by the geographical circumstances upon the sacred writings.

A knowledge of the geography of Palestine is particularly necessary in the interpretation of the Old Testament. Allusions to Lebanon, to Carmel, to the countries of Gilead and Bashan, to the Jordan, to the Dead Sea, and to the neighboring peoples and enemies of the Hebrews are constantly met with. No one, moreover, would imagine himself capable of comprehending the life of Christ without having some idea of the respective

positions of Galilee, Samaria, Judea, and Perea. These things are evident; but often the geographical traces left on the language are less prominent and almost unperceived. In this case one must be able to discern these traces, else the idea that they conceal will be lost.

§ 67. NATURAL AND ORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES.

The general aspect of the country, the vegetation, climate, domesticated or savage animals, the rustic usages and pleasures have still more influence upon the thought, and hence upon the expressions employed to transmit it. They act a grand part in the development of the imagination, in the poetry of language, in the admiration of nature. And in proportion as the writers are from a rural condition and of simple habits will this influence be marked and these traces be profound. The interpreter, in order to appreciate the beauty of the Old Testament poetry, must employ this key to its treasures. The same means of interpretation is necessary in studying the New Testament, which, although being less poetical, reflects something of the nature and climate of Palestine, especially in its more familiar parts.

When Christ compares the kingdom of God to a grain of mustard seed (Matt. xiii. 31); when He points to the lilies of the fields, which, in spite of their glory, bloom to be cast into the oven (Matt. vi. 28–30); when He appeals to the atmospheric signs known to the Pharisees (Matt. xvi. 2, 3), He links His thoughts to the natural circumstances familiar to all. The force of these comparisons lies in the fact that they were perfectly understood by those to whom they were addressed. Therefore the interpreter, in order to appreciate this force, must become as familiar, as were the Jews, with these circumstances.

When the apostles speak simply and naturally of their navigation, of their fishing, and the dangers incurred upon the sea of Tiberius; when they measure with the eye the distance of the bark from the shore, as they throw the nets to the right or the left side, and as they count their fish (John xxi. 3–11), we have other natural circumstances to be known, other impressions and habits, created by these circumstances, to be studied. There is a second nature to be analyzed in order that these circumstances may be taken due account of in the interpretation. At this point the natural and personal circumstances interpenetrate.

The usages and customs of the country exert the same kind of influence upon the sacred writings. It is necessary to understand these in order to appreciate such statements as the following: John the Baptist fed upon locusts and was clothed with camel's hair. John the Apostle is designated as the disciple who at table reclined upon the bosom of Jesus, and the Saviour is represented as riding in triumph to Jerusalem on a humble beast of burden. These customs should be studied by the interpreter, since they are foreign to us at this day and yet necessary to interpretation.

§ 68. POLITICAL POSITION.

The political condition of a people leaves profound traces upon their national writings, causing them, at least, to assume a popular and social character. The New Testament will present the needed proof of this statement. The political circumstances of Palestine, at the time that it was written, are of great importance to the correct understanding of this book. Perhaps it is not too much to say that no other department of biblical archæology is so fruitful of results. If this were the

place, much might be said of the opposite elements that the Roman conquest introduced, of the contentions which resulted in the administration of this era, of the peculiar position which, in this respect, was occupied by the contemporaries of the disciples. The opposition of Jewish usages to Roman laws is very frequently observable in the Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles.

The power was at this time exercised partly by the Roman procurators, partly by the dynasty of the Herods. This singular dynasty was always placed a little in the shade and upon the second plane in the gospel history, and belonged to a family which was numerous, cruel, vainglorious, and dissolute; Jewish by faith, foreign by race, and Roman by manners. The obligatory Roman imposts were collected at the same time with the voluntary Jewish taxes. The Roman law and the Jewish law were both admitted or at least tolerated; and in His discourses Christ makes allusion sometimes to the one and sometimes to the other. In the legal processes against the Saviour or against His disciples, we find always a striking contrast, and a fixed opposition between the political toleration of the Romans and the fanatical intolerance of the Jews. These oppositions are all due to the political state of Palestine. Hence is found in the Gospels a great number of facts, discourses, and debates which are veritable enigmas to interpreters, who ignore this political condition of affairs. Two examples will be sufficient to show the utility of this means of interpretation:

1. The Saviour's aversion to being too soon recognized as the Messiah, and His continual commands of silence in reference to His life and miracles, are a problem which has often embarrassed interpreters. This is indeed an inexplicable problem if one forgets the seditious spirit of the Jews and their irritation under the Roman domin-

ion. Impatient to throw off this foreign yoke, and believing themselves assured of victory under the leadership of the expected Messiah, they would have hastened, had not Jesus taken this precaution, to begin a revolution in His name. They would thus have compromised the character of Christ, whose kingdom is not of this world, and who did not wish to have His death tainted with the least appearance of sedition.

2. The contempt and hatred into which the Jewish custom-house officers had fallen, and the very name of *tax-gatherer* being used as synonymous with whatever is odious and contemptible, are to be explained only by the system of taxation adopted by the conquerors. The customs were farmed out to the highest bidder, as they were in France in the era of the Contractors. The inferior collectors ground down their fellow-countrymen with more rigor than foreign collectors would have dared to exercise. The native tax-gatherers, by their cupidity, aided the Roman oppression and were hence doomed to national, religious, and political hatred.

§ 69. RELIGIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES.

Nothing exerts such an influence on the language of a people as its national belief. It may be compared to a mould, in which the thoughts and images, the modes of poetical and prose expression, receive their form and character.

In the interpretation of the Bible it is necessary to take account both of this general influence of national belief upon language and of the personal religious sentiments of the authors. Moreover, attention must be given to all the different forms of worship surrounding the sacred writers, as well as to that form recognized by the Government. Here is where much difficulty orig-

inates. Time destroys these different sects and obscures their theories, removes idolatry with its strange and cruel rites; and thus many things are rendered unintelligible to us which were perfectly clear to the first readers of the Word. The Bible abounds in allusions to the idolatrous ceremonials, religious aberrations, and sectarian doctrines contemporary with the authors. These acted their part in the intellectual and moral sphere of the apostles' times, and have left their impress upon the Bible language. But a few centuries later, all this had disappeared, new usages of language had been formed under the influence of other beliefs, and the learned could scarcely comprehend what was once intelligible to the ignorant.

This state of affairs imposes serious duties upon the interpreter. He should study all the religious facts which have left their impress upon the language of the Scriptures. He should investigate, not only the influence of the true belief, but also the idolatrous practices which, by their connection or contrast with the true faith, have modified in some degree the language, history, and legislation of the Old Testament. In order to comprehend the mission of Moses it is necessary to place it in contrast with Egyptian superstition, from which he was to wean the Hebrews; as also with the infamous idolatries of the Canaanites and the other peoples with whom they were brought in contact. The interpreter should study, moreover, the numerous traces left in the New Testament by the doctrines of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and even the Essenes, an important faction of the time, although not mentioned in the Scriptures. Examination must also be made of the Platonic and Cabalistic theories and their relations to Gnosticism; for they exerted an influence upon the languages of St. John and of St. Paul. However, this means of interpretation should not

be used extravagantly, any more than it should be ignored entirely. It should be confined within the limits of common-sense and just criticism. Some scholars have erred in being too proud of their knowledge of these opposing theories, and have endeavored to apply this hermeneutical resource too universally. Others, at the same time, being hostile to the doctrine of inspiration, have transformed it into a weapon for the overthrow of Christianity. To rationalists of this class, St. John appears a Gnostic; St. Paul only a Pharisee founding a new sect; and the Saviour himself only a Rabbin more independent and more consistent than his contemporaries. In the whole field of Historical Hermeneutics there is perhaps no series of ideas and facts so important, so useful to interpretation, and yet so easy to be abused and misapplied, as the social circumstances and (under these) the religious circumstances.

§ 70. EFFECTS PRODUCED UPON THE WRITERS, AND TRACES LEFT IN THE SACRED WRITINGS, BY THESE SOCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

Under this heading we exhibit a succinct statement of the modifications produced by these circumstances, although the examples already given may seem sufficient:

(*a*). The social circumstances gave rise to institutions, with which the interpreter ought to be acquainted, inasmuch as they modified forms of expression. Compare what is said above, of the influence of political circumstances upon the civil position of the contemporaries of Christ.

(*b*). The social circumstances are the source of many images, allusions, and figures scattered through the poetical, oratorical, and even didactic portions of the Word. These figurative references are appropriate and

expressive when they are understood, but vague, or absolutely lost, or even a source of error, when their origin, nature, and object are ignored. Two examples will confirm this assertion in a striking manner. Some one asked Jesus if He would pay the tribute (Matt. xvii. 24–27), and He paid it, at the same time observing that ordinarily kings do not exact tribute of their children. This passage is unintelligible, and the lesson it contains entirely lost to him who is ignorant of the special character of the didrachma. This was a *voluntary* and *religious* tax paid by the Jews for the expenses of their worship. From this circumstance may be understood the request, and not demand, of the collectors and the true force of our Saviour's reasoning, which contains a positive declaration of His divine nature. In 1 Cor. ix. 24–27, Paul addresses to his readers an earnest exhortation to perseverance, renunciation, and effort. He makes allusion constantly, and more or less clearly, to the athletic games of Greece, which were certainly familiar to the Corinthians. The lesser details, as indeed the whole of the passage, gain much beauty by being observed from the stand-point of the race-ground and the arena.

(*c*). The religious circumstances were the occasion of many direct or indirect polemics against idolatrous or dangerous theories. These polemics are necessarily much less clear to us than to those to whom they were originally addressed. In order to comprehend that which was clear to the first readers of the Bible, we must know what they knew—the errors that the writers had in view. It is sufficient to recall the attacks made by the prophets upon idolatry, the references in the Sermon on the Mount to the dangerous teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees, and the indirect argument contained in the epistle to the Colossians against the Essenes of Asia Minor.

(*d*). The change of the social circumstances often alters

the signification of the words that they have created. Reference can be made, for example, to the present use of the words Priest, Deacon, and Bishop, as compared with the literal sense of *πρεσβύτερος*, *διάκονος*, and *ἐπίσκοπος*.

§ 71. MEANS TO BE EMPLOYED BY THE INTERPRETER.

It will be understood that the task of the interpreter, so far as it relates to the social circumstances of the writers, is burdensome and difficult. There are three elements of success, three means of accomplishing this task, to which we desire to direct attention:

1. The study of Biblical Archæology. The necessity of this study is demonstrated by universal experience. Oriental usages, the manners of the patriarchs, the Mosaic legislation, sacred geography, and Egyptian antiquities, are essential elements in interpretation, and therefore should be studied with care.

2. A philosophical method and critical talent are also essential in order to make use of this study with discernment. Tact and judgment can not be acquired, it is true; but those who understand the importance of the study can, at least, hold themselves under judicious restraint. All can take account of the times and the localities in which a writing was composed. Every one has sufficient tact, if he would use it, not to imagine that the manners of the patriarchs are sufficiently explained by a Greek custom, a passage in the Old Testament by a verse in Virgil, or the discourses of our Saviour by the fantastic dreams of the Talmud. Every one has sufficient judgment to seek in the East for the solution of the enigmas of the East, and not to commit the anachronism of putting the sacred authors in correspondence with posterior sources, or sources without relation to their own nation.

3. The assiduous, complete, and continued reading of

the Bible is very essential. This reading, as it is necessary to the theologian in explaining all the ideas of the Bible, is especially useful in order to appreciate social circumstances and their influence. It is an internal investigation, which, by way of analysis, enables one to recognize and authenticate social circumstances and to judge of the truthfulness of the explanations given. It furnishes to the interpreter all the facts and a knowledge of all the details favorable or unfavorable to each explanation. This constant communion with the sacred volume is also the most effectual preservative against those imaginary hypotheses which are directly opposed to archæology, hermeneutics, and faith.

SECTION THIRD.

PHILOLOGICAL HABITS OF THE AUTHORS.

§ 72. GENERALLY CONSIDERED.

AMONG the historical circumstances which influence the authors to be interpreted, should be placed prominently the philological habits of the authors themselves. It will be understood that the use, either exact or inexact, of the language of a writer, must exert an influence upon the rules by which his writings are to be interpreted.

These habits pertain strictly to Historical Hermeneutics, not only because they are facts, but also because they have their causes and explanations in history. These philological circumstances, so far as they pertain to the sacred authors, may be summed up in two general facts, as important as they are incontestable:

1. The language of the sacred writers is wanting in precision.
2. It moreover abounds in figures.

A. LANGUAGE WANTING IN PRECISION.

§ 73. A PRIORI: AUTHORS AND LANGUAGE.

Looking at the position, the nationality, the circumstances of the sacred authors from an *a priori* standpoint, we ought not to demand of them an exact and precise language. Ancient authors generally use a language less precise and possess a method less rigorous than modern writers. But in addition to this the sacred writers were:

(*a*). *Orientals.* From this results almost necessarily that their language is highly colored rather than exact, more fervent than rigorous and formulated.

(*b*). *Jews*, who were not a speculative people, addicted to philosophical research.

(*c*). *Uneducated men.* The majority of the sacred writers were men of the people. This fact should cause us to expect a language more vivid and animated than exact and methodical. St. Paul, the most cultivated of the New Testament authors, said of himself that he was ἰδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ (2 Cor. xi. 6).

Thus, from an *a priori* investigation we might expect an energetic and animated, rather than a scholarly, language in the Bible.

§ 74. STYLE OF THE BIBLE.

1. We shall first make a few detailed observations in regard to the style of the Scriptures:

(*a*). In the greater part of the sacred books, at least in those of the New Testament, we find no trace of labored style, no effort in the direction of artistic writing. Particularly in the doctrinal writings—those of Matthew, John, Paul, Peter, and James—there is nothing of this kind. Paul, the most remarkable of these, expresses himself in a style which does not conform to the rhetorical method of the schools. His writings betray in each line the struggle which existed between the grandeur of his ideas, the ardor of his sentiments, and his inability to express them in words of sufficient clearness and force. To transform these phrases into exact formulas and complete transmissions of thought, would be to ignore the nature of his style.

(*b*). The Scriptures appear to be designed generally to operate upon the imagination and the heart rather than the intellect. The poetical and oratorical styles are

often encountered, particularly in the most important books. The authors give frequent evidence of emotion and labor to move their readers. In these circumstances there is much which is necessary to mankind, but which excludes the possibility of precise and philosophical language.

(*c*). The abstract and dogmatic ideas are often expressed in the Bible by figures. This gives both beauty and the possibility of obscurity to the style of the sacred volume.

An example of this is found in the Old Testament in the manner in which the attributes of God are expressed. His Omnipotence and Omnipresence often strike the imagination of the Hebrews, and are ordinarily expressed with the aid of anthropomorphism by attributing hands and eyes to God for these attributes. Even in reference to His Justice and Goodness, God is represented as repenting, being angry and appeased. We are accustomed to employ the same mode of speech, referring to the patience, protection, and severity of God, which ideas are certainly anthropomorphic. There is no precise word in Hebrew to express eternity, either posterior or anterior. In default of a better mode of expression, the writers employ certain substantives and particles of a restricted sense, which can indicate the idea but vaguely. Thus עוֹלָם, "hidden time"; קֶדֶם, "what is before," "olden time"; עַד, "a passing, progress in space, also duration in time"; אָז, "time as passing," derived from a root signifying to pass away, have all been employed. The ideas of the Bible, which are essentially doctrinal, those which pertain to the Gospel and relate to salvation, are, in default of words sufficiently precise, expressed in figurative terms as *ζωή, ἀπολύτρωσις, υἱοθεσία,* etc. An interesting

study from this point of view may be made of 1 Cor. xv. 39–50, where the apostle seeks to express in popular and figurative language matters at once dogmatic and philosophic, of which he finally gives a clear and brief, but necessarily negative summation.

2. The general impression of the whole biblical style will lead us to the same result. No one can arise from the perusal of the Bible without being struck with the animated and popular tone of its didactic teaching, its oratorical passages expressing the eloquence of the heart and its poetry brimful of emotion. No one can fail to discover that the writers, of whatever class, prefer expressions which are fervent and animated, rather than formulated and precise. The prophets are poets, the poets are prophets; the historians are orators, and the orators historians, but no one is a rhetorician.

It is fortunate, therefore, that the sacred writers did not pretend to exactness of expression and precision of thought. God is wiser than men. The human critic would affirm *a priori* that Revelation ought to be formulated and codified. Then it might have fixed itself in the memory and presented itself acceptably to the intellect, but it would have remained forever foreign to the heart and unintelligible to the masses, whom it is necessary to seek and save. The grand object of divine truth is not to lodge systems in the mind, but to enkindle affections in the heart.

§ 75. RULES ARISING FROM THE PECULIAR NATURE OF THE STYLE.

It is difficult to deduce from the subject of the preceding paragraph any positive hermeneutical rules. Rules can be derived only from uniform principles and permanent facts; but there is nothing uniform in this

case. Three general directions, however, may be given, founded upon this variability itself:

1. The interpreter should never press the sense of the words, at least when it is not evident that in the particular passage with which he is engaged the author has in an exceptional manner formulated his idea. The interpreter ought to proportionate, so to speak, the rigor of his interpretation to the more or less positive and didactic character of the book and passage before him.

2. The interpreter should always endeavor to discover the meaning of the phrase to be interpreted, and for this purpose he should seek as much aid as possible from the context. This is the best means of discovering the real idea of the author, and of remedying the irregularity of his style.

3. In order to comprehend the language of Scripture, it is necessary to receive on our own souls the impression it was intended to produce. Hence we should study it, not only with logic and erudition, but also and especially with religious sensibility. To understand the Bible, the student must associate himself as far as possible with the masses to whom the message was originally addressed. He must mingle with that multitude which was reached and transformed by the voice of the Saviour and His apostles.

B. FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE.

§ 76. FACTS.

The language of the Bible is, in many instances, highly figurative. It should be remembered, however, that this is no concession to those who deny the inspiration of the Word, since a figure or parable may be just as much inspired as a rigid syllogism.

All the sacred writers employ figures, although in different degrees, according to the nature of their subject and their own mental characteristics. Moses and David, Solomon and St. Paul, Isaiah and St. John resemble each other in this respect. Our Saviour, particularly, was accustomed to clothe His thoughts in figurative and popular language. When He gives in a succession of parables the history of the Kingdom of Heaven, and describes the happiness of believers who are to sup with Him there; when He commands His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and promises the waters of the river of life to thirsty souls; when He calls His body a temple, which, being destroyed, He will raise again in three days, and when He gives the name of this body broken for our sins to the bread which is only the emblem—it is by striking, touching, pathetic, and sublime figures that He seizes the attention, fixes the memory, and attracts the heart.

The figures ordinarily used by the sacred writers are derived from objects familiar to their readers—as sacred history, the pastoral life, the nature of the locality, its beauties, and its phenomena. Hence the frequent metaphors, the tropes of all kinds, and more especially the parables of Jesus, make the truth vivid, ingenious, attractive, and fruitful, even familiar, to the Orientals. Parables are as frequent in the Talmud as in the Gospels, and by this single circumstance the language of the Rabbins has some relation to that of the Saviour. Sometimes the truth of the Bible is clothed in a form almost dramatic, as in Isa. xliv. and James ii.

Poetry makes its appearance with its raiment embroidered with beautiful figures, and throws its rich mantle over many portions of the sacred truth. It shows its influence not simply in the style and deductions, but may be also discovered in the general arrangement and

plan of a Psalm or of an entire prophecy, as in the 50th or 107th Psalm, or in the book of Joel.

Some traces of allegories are also found in the Bible, and upon these some remarks are necessary. Allegory is very attractive to the Oriental mind. All the compositions of Eastern lands are interwoven with allegories, which are generally developed and applied at considerable length. It would be naturally expected that traces of Oriental allegories should be found in the Bible, which originated in a country thronging with them. The sobriety, however, with which they are used is worthy of remark, and may be regarded as an effect and token of divine inspiration. They are rarely used and always brief. The author never follows them to a fanciful conclusion, in the manner of the Orientals, in order to show the brilliancy of his imagination. A Bible allegory is little more than a series of allusions to the same figure, designed to reach the intelligence by riveting the attention. It is always abandoned before it can become a mere play of fancy either to the writer or readers. Refer to Isa. v. 1–6; Psalm lxxx.; Mark xii. 1–8; 1 Cor. iii. 11–15; v. 6–8.

§ 77. CONSEQUENCES TO HERMENEUTICS.

The interpretation of the Bible is rendered difficult by its figurative language. There is danger of attributing too much to the imagination of the writer or of exciting too highly the fancy of the interpreter. The work of Hermeneutics is to bring back the figurative language of the Bible to positive ideas. Entering into this work there are two questions to be decided: (1) whether the language is or is not figurative; (2) and, if it is, to determine its true sense. The topics under this section, therefore, are twofold. The investigation of the figure, and the investigation of the figurative sense.

§ 78. INVESTIGATION OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE.

This investigation can not be successfully accomplished by intellectual science alone. Judgment and good faith, critical tact and impartiality, are also necessary. A few general indications are all that can be given in this connection.

1. *A priori.* (*a*). The probability that the language is figurative is strong in the poetical or sententious writings, and also in the oratorical and popular discourses. Generally this probability is augmented when it is a fair supposition that the writer has been induced by his situation, his subject, or his object, to make use of such language. (*b*). There is a probability of the same kind, but much stronger when the passage under examination is animated and highly wrought, and seems to make allusion to objects of another nature.

2. *A posteriori.* (*a*). There is a probability still greater when the literal sense would be absurd, as in these words: "This is my body"; or contrary to the instruction of Scripture, as the promise of a supper in the kingdom of heaven; or unworthy of God, as when the Bible attributes to Him the organs and passions of men; or immoral, as in the command that is given to Hosea the prophet to espouse a prostitute; or, in short, in evident opposition to the context and the object of the writer. (*b*). All these probabilities, however, are still insufficient. It is further necessary to examine the passage in all its details, critically, exegetically, and faithfully. The figurative sense must be sustained by all these processes before it can be relied upon as the true interpretation.

§ 79. INVESTIGATION OF THE FIGURATIVE SENSE.

(*a*). *The Principle.*—The existence of figurative language in a given passage once determined, the task of the interpreter consists in unveiling the idea which is often obscured by the figure. The very nature of figurative language thus renders difficult the discovery of the principle idea. The same difficulty is experienced by him who studies hieroglyphics, paintings, sculpture, and whatever conveys an idea figuratively expressed. In all such cases there is danger of neglecting the essential, in order to scrutinize the secondary, idea. This is because the essential idea is abstract, invisible, and vague, while the secondary idea is composed of visible and prominent traits which excite attention and invite examination. Thus in the parabolic and figurative discourses of the Bible, there is a temptation to be preoccupied with the depicted objects, the detailed descriptions, the persons brought upon the scene, and the successive acts, instead of dwelling upon the thought and lesson which were the absorbing idea in the mind of the sacred author.

(*b*). *The Facts.*—A careful examination of the biblical language, figures, and facts will ordinarily be sufficient to prevent these misconceptions. The very details, upon which the interpreter might be tempted to place too much importance, are frequently of use in determining the general idea. They are often of such a nature as to exclude all possible symbolization. When the Saviour compares the coming of the Son of Man to that of a thief in the night, and the mercy of His Father to the impatience of an unjust judge, it is evident that such details are out of all harmony with the instruction, and have for their object only the completion of the figure by rendering it recognizable and striking. Sometimes, on the other hand, the details which appear necessary to

complete the figure are intentionally omitted, as if to instruct us to seek for the essential idea elsewhere than in the details. The conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus is particularly instructive in this respect. The Saviour said to Nicodemus (John iii. 3), that it is necessary to be "born again" in order to see the kingdom of heaven. The Pharisee could not comprehend this mysterious and brief figure and demands the details. "How can a man be born when he is old?" To which our Saviour responds: "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he can not enter into the kingdom of God." When (John i. 51) He affirms that the disciples should see heaven open and the angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man, He accomplishes the same thing, while He designedly envelopes the thought in imagery sublime, striking, and clear as to the general idea, but vague and intangible as to the details.

There are, moreover, many cases wherein the figure, although being considerably developed, can not be pressed without being attended with inaccuracy and confusion in the indicated relations. In no place, perhaps, is this more prominent than in Matt. xi. 16, where Jesus compares the then present generation "to children calling unto their fellows: 'We have piped unto you and ye have not danced, etc.'" Now the connection proves that not the children who cried, but the companions to whom they cried, were in the eyes of Jesus the types of the generation which he censured. In John x. 1–16, Jesus speaks figuratively of what He is to believers, whom He designates as His sheep. But to this general figure are attached several particular and irreconcilable images. At one place He is represented as the door through which the sheep and shepherds, but not the thieves, enter; further on, He is the shepherd himself—the true and good shepherd—in opposition to the thieves

and mercenaries. In all these—as in all such—cases, the details of the figure must not be arbitrarily pressed. This discussion may be concluded with the words of St. Augustine (De civ. Dei, xvi. 2): "Non sane omnia quae gesta narrantur aliquid etiam significare putanda sunt, sed propter illa quae aliquid significant, etiam ea quae nihil significant, attexuntur."

(*c*). *Rules and Applications.*—In the investigation of the figurative sense, therefore, the interpreter is required to discover the principal idea, without placing too much importance upon the details. This rule is of easy application when the figures are simply and briefly indicated, as when Jesus says: "This is my body," or "Destroy this temple." The same is true in metaphors and other abbreviated figures, where the point of contact between the thought and the comparison is so prominent that one can not be mistaken. An example of this is found in Rom. viii. 17, where Paul, in a transport of assurance and faith, writes: "If children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ!" Every one discovers that the apostle is here speaking only of the advantages that believers, united to Christ, receive together with Him from their common Father. The metaphor contained in the word "heir" would become absurd if pressed to completion, as it would imply the death of the Father before we could enter upon the inheritance.

But the application of this rule is by no means so simple when the figure is prolonged. In this case, the main idea must first be found and considered of the first importance, then the secondary thoughts should be carefully studied and wisely grouped around it. In allegories, particularly, many of the details have each an important sense, worthy of influencing the general result. In the parable (Mark. xii.) of the vine-dressers who kill first the servants of the master and then his heir, it is

clear that the pains which the master took with the vineyard, the servants he employed, the final mission of his son, and the crime of the vine-dressers, are successively of individual importance and worthy of individual study, as illustrative of the mercy of God toward the ungrateful Jews. This is therefore an allegory and not strictly a parable. But to dwell upon the number of the servants employed, to insist upon the hedge planted, the wine-press dug, and the tower erected by the precaution of the master, as upon so many distinct ideas of importance, would be to misconceive the intention of the Saviour, and make His instruction food for fancy and not for faith.

In the parables, the general idea is ordinarily the only one to be retained, while the details ought to be left aside. The first supposition should be that a figurative passage is a parable, since allegories are rare and brief in the Bible. To speak generally, the allegorical spirit is eminently anti-biblical. It possesses something ingenious, fanciful, and curious which does not conduce to edification, and is strongly opposed to the clear, practical, and subjective tendencies of the sacred writers. It is of great importance, therefore, not to transform parables into allegories, as some have endeavored to do in reference to the parable of the ten virgins (Matt. xxv.) This can not be done without mixing false and curious ideas with simple and divine truth.

Special importance should be attached to this last rule, since there is a great tendency at present, in the popular system of Bible study and Bible readings, to please the fancy rather than instruct the heart. The Word of God is not a jewel-casket from which radiants may be taken to adorn the brow, but a store-house from which spiritual food and drink should be derived to nourish the soul.

(*d*). *Practical Counsels.*—The rules above given are still insufficient, and in some cases only remove the difficulty farther back.

We must add a few practical suggestions, attention to which will be of use in directing the interpreter.

1. He should make it his constant duty to consult the context. Often the occasion or cause of the parable is sufficient to determine its object, and thus to indicate its limits. Sometimes the sacred author takes pains to give a summary of his thought in the context. In Luke, 12th chapter, 36th to 39th verses, Christ employs two very different figures in order to enforce diligence in awaiting His return. He compares Himself to the master who returns from the wedding, expecting to find his servants awake, and to the thief who surprises in the night the ignorant or imprudent family. Then He recapitulates the ideas, differently expressed in figure, but identical in reality, in these words: "Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of Man will come ἡ ὥρα οὐ δοκεῖτε." Thus the idea of the figures is explained by the speaker himself. To the same effect in Matthew xxv. 13, Jesus concludes the parable of the Virgins with these words: "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh." This explains the whole parable by giving a summary of its main ideas, and prevents its being transformed into an allegory. The context is as useful, therefore, in discovering the figurative, as the didactic, sense.

2. Nothing will better conduce to the formation of good sense and critical tact in the interpreter than the habitual reading of the Bible. This will qualify him for appreciating the figures with which he so frequently meets in it. Each language as well as each country has its peculiar tropes, used so frequently as to be recognized at first sight. The English language, for example,

abounds in expressions which were originally metaphorical, but have become ordinary by frequent usage. No one imagines himself to be composing poetry, when he speaks of a dilapidated fortune, or a shelter from danger, or the rising of the sun. These concealed figures are much more frequent even in the sacred languages; and it is the habitual reader of the Bible who is able to detect them. The prophets of the Old Testament, in particular, make repeated use of certain favorite images, which were originally sublime and pathetic, but have become common by familiar use. Although intelligible to the first readers of the Bible, they are obscure to us, and can be understood only by reading and re-reading the writings which contain them. Thus the commotions in the heavens, of the stars and of the sun and moon, simply announce great political and social revolutions. The peaceful dwelling of the ferocious beasts with the docile and timid animals betokens a time of peace and universal benevolence. Such poetical ideas can only be appreciated by him who peruses, and meditates upon, the Bible with a view to cultivate his sympathy with such beautiful expressions.

SECTION FOURTH.

CIRCUMSTANCES PECULIAR TO THE WRITINGS.

A TWO-FOLD division will be made under this general subject. (*a*). The internal circumstances, pertaining to the character or special nature of the writing. (*b*). The external circumstances which have contributed to the determination of the Bible's contents, such as the object, the occasion, the epoch, and the persons.

A. INTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

§ 80. INFLUENCE OF THE DIVERSITY OF KINDS OF WRITING.

The nature of a writing will necessarily exert an influence upon its interpretation. No one would imagine it allowable to comment, in the same manner, upon the writings of Blackstone, and the poetical meditations of Wordsworth. This principle is of great importance in reference to the Bible. There are two ideas to be borne in mind in reference to this subject.

(*a*). The diversity of kind in the biblical writings leads us naturally to suppose that there is a corresponding diversity of dispositions in the authors, or at least the employment of different faculties.

(*b*). Diversity of kind also produces a necessary diversity in the forms of expression and in the figures of speech. The same ideas are expressed in different words, and the same words do not exactly correspond to the same ideas in different books. The historical, didac-

tic, oratorical, poetical, and sententious kinds of writing will be successively studied.

§ 81. THE HISTORICAL WRITINGS.

The Bible historians in most cases recount the facts simply, clearly, and without pretension. Hence the attention of the interpreter should be centered upon the facts related. Although simple as seems the task of the interpreter of the historical writings, yet certain difficulties are always encountered. These pertain to the extraordinary nature of the facts related, and to the simple, brief, and often abridged character of the narrative. Another difficulty is found in the difference of individuality between the writer and the interpreter. The latter should therefore endeavor to be identified with the sacred historian, and to reproduce the facts and their details, not simply as they appear to him to be most probably correct, but as far as possible as the historian conceived them and desired them to be transmitted. This rule has been frequently disregarded in regard to the narratives of miracles. The rationalism of the last century went to a great extreme of error in following the mania for transforming miracles into natural facts. Without going to such an extent, many orthodox critics have disregarded this rule, with an apologetic intention, in order to get rid of, as far as possible, the supernatural element in the biblical narrative. They have made too great a concession to popular demand. The truth, first of all, should be the motto of the interpreter. But, on the other hand, care should be taken not to add to the literal narrative when a miracle is not clearly indicated. More than once the evangelist, struck by a remarkable fact, reported it, without saying whether it was a miracle of their Master or only a providential occurrence. Examples may be found in John viii. 59, where Jesus

escapes from the hands of those who wish to stone Him; and in John xviii. 6, where the Saviour's simple question causes those who came to arrest Him to fall back amazed.

When the narrative is abridged, much aid may be derived frequently from the parallel accounts, especially in the Gospels. This fourfold and symmetrical history of Christ is of immense value to the interpreter. A comparison of the four Gospels clears up many obscurities, fills up many gaps, and adds supplementary details to each independent account. The very diversity between the several histories of the Saviour's life adds value to each and gives completeness to the whole account. Thus, the parable of the vine-dressers is related with much more fullness and detail in Matthew than in Luke, but in Luke's account are found these two words, *μὴ γένοιτο*, which throw much light on the whole scene. It is a cry which escapes from the conscience of the culpable magistrates, showing that they had well comprehended the striking parable of the Saviour. The resentment thus excited can therefore be understood.

§ 82. CHRONOLOGY.

The historical writings present a peculiar question, which sometimes creates difficulties for the interpreter, sometimes furnishes advantages to him, but always imposes special duties upon him. We refer to historical chronology. It is absolutely necessary for the interpreter to know just at what point this chronology has been observed and where it has been ignored. If one is determined to find a regular chronology in the Old Testament, he is doomed to disappointment. In order to complete such a chronology, startling hypotheses must be advocated. This view is fortunately almost abandoned. As to the New Testament, the same difficulties

exist, although perhaps not to the same degree. Even the Gospels can not be arranged as to all their details into a regular harmony. Calvin has recognized this fact, and has perhaps too rigidly excluded the chronological element from the Gospels. The present state of chronological science is such that the interpreter can derive very little benefit from it. There are a few general directions which will be of use, and will be found frequently applicable:

(*a*). The arrangement of the Gospels is generally chronological. Many obvious causes, however, were in operation to disturb the regularity of this order.

(*b*). More than once the evangelists have intentionally subordinated the chronological order to the interests of divine instruction. This is especially the case in the Gospel of Matthew. He has in more than one instance grouped together the discourses of Christ in such a manner as to render them more solemn and prominent.

(*c*). A critical examination of the Gospels induces the belief that the evangelists inserted therein many incidents preserved in their memory. It would be natural for the writers to insert an incident particularly pleasing to themselves side by side with an analogous transaction which they were at the time recording. These insertions can not always be reconciled with the exact historical order.

(*d*). In case of any confusion in the order of events recorded by the evangelists, we are induced by critical examination to recognize St. John as the most exact of the four.

(*e*). Indications of very important times are found in the Gospels, around which a number of facts is grouped, and to which special attention must therefore be given. These special occasions are often described with great chronological exactness.

Thus, the first two Gospels indicate with great care that the transfiguration of Jesus took place *six days after* a remarkable conversation reported in the three synoptical Gospels—Matthew xvi. 13, Mark viii. 27, and Luke ix. 18. Luke, however, in chapter ix. verse 28, without being so precise, confirms this indicated fact in the following words: ὡσεὶ ἡμέραι ὀκτώ. No doubt, therefore, can be entertained as to this relative date. But if we desire to know the absolute date and seek in the same Gospels the time from which they counted the six days, we find ourselves enveloped in uncertainties. Ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις (Mark viii. 1) is Mark's starting point. We must be satisfied, therefore, with an approximate chronology in these events.

§ 83. INFLUENCE OF THE INDIVIDUALITY OF THE HISTORIANS.

The historical writings are to a certain extent dependent for interpretation upon the individuality of the historians. We must become convinced of each writer's modes of expression and style of thought before we can successfully interpret his works. A knowledge of his intellectual and moral characteristics is required in the interpretation of the Bible. In reference to the Old Testament, this investigation will be found peculiarly beneficial. It will reveal the probability that prophets were the authors of the books of Kings, and that priests penned the Chronicles. It will inspire even a greater confidence in the Mosaic records, because they are so deeply impressed with simplicity, humility, and disinterestedness.

The thoughts and sentiments of the biblical historians are revealed in a thousand little details allowed to creep into the record. These indications of personality are

here more rare than in the other kinds of writings, but are all the more precious. Their very rarity and invisibility inspire us with full confidence in the sincerity of the writer.

A remarkable example of this individuality of historians may be observed in the case of Mark. He presents more than any other those slight observations and minute circumstances which vividly depict the scene, satisfy the mind, and persuade the heart.

§ 84. THE DIDACTIC WRITINGS.

Next to the historical the didactic writings are those in which the idea ought to be the most literally understood, since the writer has instruction for his principal object. In the didactic writings the revealed truths are principally to be found. In the interpretation of these the utmost caution and reserve are to be observed. It is here, if we may so speak, that the word of God is most clearly revealed. There is neither the imagery of poetry nor the emotion of oratory to bewilder and mislead. The phrase is to be read literally and the thought transmitted conscientiously.

There are, nevertheless, certain difficulties in the interpretation of didactic writings. For instance, the theologian is required to distinguish between the instruction and the arguments by which it is supported. Both are divinely inspired, but special attention must be paid to the former. The arguments are only a divine condescension to persuade the auditors or the readers. God commands, and the wherefore is not necessary. But in some cases He graciously argues the point or gratuitously gives the reasons for a command. An example is found in Matthew xxii., where Jesus maintains, against the crafty ignorance of the Sadducees, the reality and the spirituality of the future life.

A further difficulty will be found in the absence of logical method in the sacred writings. In the Scriptures the instruction is scarcely ever given in a form purely and clearly didactic. In the New Testament the epistles presuppose an epistolary language, and the discourses of Christ often bring with them the style of a dialogue. This familiar manner of discourse often causes many omissions, sometimes of the premises and sometimes of the thesis. The task of the interpreter is to derive from this commingling of methods an orderly plan of argument. In order, therefore, to succeed in understanding the didactic portions of the New Testament, the theologian has need of real sagacity, clearness of mind, and justness of judgment. Sagacity will enable him to seize the important and central idea, clear insight will aid him in distinguishing this from all secondary ideas, and judgment will dispose the whole in logical order.

§ 85. ORATORICAL WRITINGS.

Didactic instruction, by being invested with popular form, is easily made to assume the oratorical character. Oratorical writings unite the person with the idea, emotion with instruction, and desire of persuading with the exposition of truth. Thus the orator is induced to present prominently both himself and the individuals to whom he speaks. He is led to address himself to their individuality, and to derive aid from the circumstances in which they are found. Hence in oratorical writings are found forms unknown to the preceding kinds, objects much more complex, more flowing styles, the employment of more numerous figures, and more personal arguments. The task of the interpreter is necessarily modified by these circumstances. In addition to the new difficulties created by the grandeur of the style, the colored

thoughts, and the richness of the figures, there is greater difficulty in discovering and distinguishing the main idea. A large portion of the biblical writings assumes this oratorical form. It is found in the legislative deliverances of Moses and in the chants of the prophets. Deuteronomy is almost entirely composed in oratorical style. The latter part of Isaiah contains it, and it is found mingled with the poetical instructions in the book of Job. The New Testament presents a number of cases of its employment. It is often found in the epistles and even in the dialogues, sometimes rising to the height of pathos when the emotions of the orator so far overcome him that he addresses himself exclusively to the heart instead of to the intelligence. An example of this may be found in Romans viii. 33–39. The interpreter's task consists in extricating the precise thought from these oratorical passages.

§ 86. POETICAL WRITINGS.

These are somewhat analogous to the oratorical writings, and present about the same difficulties and encouragements to the interpreter, except that the imagination is more active and the form even more modified. The duty of the interpreter will therefore be to resolve the beauty of the divine poetry into the definite thought underlying the poetical form.

The poetry of the Bible has a twofold character:

(*a*). Sometimes it is used in prophetical writings with the evident design of enveloping the details of a prophecy in a brilliant but thick veil, which can easily be removed when the fulfillment has arrived. Examples of this prophetical use of poetry may be found in Isaiah, in Joel, and in the discourses of Christ, in reference to His future coming.

(*b*). Sometimes the poetry is merely symbolical and didactic, and is thus designed to give pungency and life to the truth imparted. Examples of the didactic use of poetry may be found in the Psalms and in the Epistle of James.

§ 87. B. EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE WRITINGS.

The circumstances to which we have special reference under this heading are the *persons* to whom the writings or the biblical discourses were addressed: *the epoch*, *the occasion*, and finally *the object* of these writings and discourses. These four circumstances are so intimately connected that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the influence of each. They may, however, be considered separately, which we will accordingly proceed to do, reserving the most general and important consideration, that of the object, until the last. The true force of the influence exerted by these external circumstances will be apparent only after the entire discussion.

(1). PERSONS TO WHOM THE WRITINGS WERE ADDRESSED.—INFLUENCE UPON THE WRITING.

An author, addressing himself to a person of peculiar character, chooses his words with reference to the effect to be produced upon him. Therefore the character and circumstances of a reader or auditor become in some degree an essential element in a correct interpretation. Reference has been made above to the social circumstances of the writer and the influence exercised by them upon his production. The influence is still more extended, if the same circumstances are common to his readers and to himself, which is often the case. Sometimes, however, the social circumstances of the readers

are foreign to the writer; but even then he takes note of this fact, and conforms himself to them, perhaps without having intended it.

Many of the circumstances are external to the person addressed, as, for example, geographical, natural, and political circumstances; prosperity, wealth, industry, renown, origin of churches, and number of believers. These will exert a special influence upon the form of the writings by determining the tone of the whole, the choice of the arguments and images. Others relate more particularly to the inner life, such as the religious circumstances, deep-rooted prejudices, intellectual and moral characteristics.

The Epistle to the Romans is strongly impressed by the influences mentioned under the first category, the Epistles to the Galatians and the Colossians by those of the second, the Epistles to the Corinthians by both.

The study of these two classes of influences renders great service to the interpreter. It enables him to distinguish between the purely *ad hominem* arguments and discourses and those which were universal in their application. It thus gives him the clue by which to determine whether a given promise and discourse pertain to a particular epoch and class of men or concern the Church universal. Some simple-minded Christians have been disturbed by the command given by the apostles, Acts xv. 29, to abstain from blood and strangled animals as well as from impurity and idolatry. Only the most literal interpreters would advocate in our day the exact and complete observance of this commandment. The opening address of this epistle sent by the apostles is sufficient to show that this is not a permanent and universal precept, but applicable only "To the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia." Some have thought that the promises of in-

spiration made by Christ to the Apostles (Matthew x. and xix., Mark xiii. 11, Luke xxi. 14, John xiv. 26, and John xvi. 13) are applicable to all true Christians. An examination of these passages, however, shows that Jesus addressed them to the apostles only on these occasions. No one is therefore authorized to extend these solemn and mysterious assurances to other men in other circumstances and other times. The consideration of the persons addressed is therefore an important resource.

(2). § 88. CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE EPOCH.

Very little need be said upon this subject, for it would be conceded by all that the events and circumstances of the epoch in which the writing was produced have modified its character. This investigation coincides largely with that of the persons and the occasion, since it gives the former their peculiarities, and to the latter its origin. Nevertheless the interpreter should constantly bear the epoch in mind, for besides aiding in the discovery both of the occasion and the object, it has often left its individual impress upon the figures and modes of speech employed.

The circumstances of the epoch, in which the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews was written, are the key to its explanation. It would be unintelligible if separated from the thought, the religious and political agitations of Palestine, a few years before the destruction of Jerusalem, and from the moral shock which resulted from that destruction to the Judeo-Christian Churches. The Apocalypse is also thoroughly imbued with the emotions and sufferings of the persecuted churches of Asia.

(3). § 89. OCCASION OF THE WRITING.

The circumstances of the epoch have often furnished an indirect *occasion* for the production of a book. But

the interpreter ought to seek besides the direct and immediate occasion. This may almost always be found, and from it great profit may be derived. The study of the occasion is much more important than that of the persons, because its influence is more widely extended. Almost all the books of the Bible, with the possible exception of those of Solomon, Job, and a few others, have been produced in view of certain circumstances of an urgent need, of an immediate work to be accomplished; in short, of an occasion more or less pressing and decisive. This fact does not, however, infringe upon the full inspiration and universal applicability of the divine Word.

The study of the occasion is therefore an important element in the interpretation of the sacred writings. In order to understand the Epistle to the Galatians, its tone of indignation, its precipitation, the nature and form of the instruction, the writer's own apology, the carefully detailed proof of his apostolic credentials, and his independence of the other apostles, it is necessary to recall that Paul had suddenly learned the defection of the Galatians, led astray by the Judaizing teachers. The surprising and continued contrasts in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians are only to be explained by remembering that the apostle found himself called upon to write to them at once, in order to praise them for having obeyed the preceding epistle, to censure them for much more grievous schisms than he had at first believed, to defend himself against indignant accusations, to recommend a collection to which they were but little disposed, and that, in the midst of this conflict of sentiments, he wished to guard against wounding the proud feelings of his readers.

In Luke ix. 50 and xi. 23 Jesus pronounces two apparently contradictory maxims: "He that is not against

us is for us," and "He that is not with me is against me." The difference of occasions explains and conciliates them. In one case He was engaged with the apparent indifference of a man who, nevertheless, rendered homage to Jesus by attempting to cast out devils in His name. In the other case the Saviour defends Himself against the poorly disguised hostility of those who attributed His miracles to the power of Beelzebub.

(4). § 90. OBJECT OF THE WRITING.

The object of the writing is the effect that the writer wishes to produce. The entire Bible may be regarded as a unit, produced by the mind of God, and designed to effect the regeneration of humankind. Regeneration, therefore, is the object of the Bible, using the word regeneration as including the whole process of redemption. Anything contrary to this sacred object must not be expected or admitted into the Bible. But the Bible itself is divided into separate books, and each of these books has its distinct object. Moreover, each portion, each phrase even of a given book has an object more special still, although concurring in the general object of the whole.

The Epistle to the Hebrews, for example, has for its object the stimulating of the shaken faith of the Jewish Christians. This general object is methodically attained by a series of successive deductions having each its own special object. One of the most remarkable chapters, the eleventh, the object of which is to magnify the power of faith, attains this object by a series of striking examples, ending with a conclusion (verses 39 and 40) which has a still more special object. This regular subordination of local objects to the general effect to be

produced characterizes this Epistle as one of strict unity of thought.

Some of the biblical books, however, have several objects; one of these is the principal object, and the others are secondary. This is the case in St. John's Gospel, the main object of which is to complete and supplement the synoptical Gospels with a secondary design of combatting the prevailing heresies. Sometimes one of the objects is final and the others instrumental. Deuteronomy—the pathetic farewell of Moses to his people—was designed to reveal and maintain his fidelity, and it was in view of this final object that the patriarch repeats and modifies his legislation. Sometimes the objects are successive, corresponding to the different portions of the book. The first epistle to the Corinthians has for the object of its first six chapters the censure of certain disorderly practices, and, for the object of the following ten chapters, the answer of some questions put by the Church of Corinth to Paul. But almost always in such a case there is a latent general object which gives unity to the book. In the case before us, Paul has in view the spiritual disorders of the Church at Corinth and seeks to remedy them.

§ 91. IMPORTANCE OF THE EXAMINATION OF THE OBJECT.

In order to exhibit this importance, it will be sufficient to compare this investigation with that of the persons, the epoch, and the occasion. The investigation of the persons and epoch are only applicable to certain books; that of the occasion can apply only to certain details of the book. An understanding of the object, on the contrary, will be useful in studying each detail and all the books.

The mind of the writer is constantly fixed upon the object he has in view, and, therefore, the attention of the interpreter should be directed to the same. This object once discovered will complete the abridged phrases, throw light upon obscurities, and detect the true meaning when several interpretations are possible. The object will aid in distinguishing the literal from the figurative, the relative from the absolute, and the main from the secondary thoughts. If we could know the special object of Mark's Gospel, we would probably find therein the explanation of the singular omission of the Saviour's discourses. The silence of St. John also in reference to the ministry of Christ in Galilee is best explained by the object which he appears to have had of supplementing the former Gospels.

§ 92. ABUSE OF THE CONSIDERATION OF THE OBJECT.

This means of interpretation as well as the context is liable to great abuse, because of its great importance in interpretation. The stronger the lever, the more is one tempted to employ it to destroy as well as to build up. Some have abused the general object by forgetting the special object; supposing that the entire book from the first to the last word should revolve around a single idea. This rigorous unity is seldom found in the biblical writings. Whatever may be the importance of the general object of the book, the special object of each section takes precedence in Hermeneutics. Some, on the other hand, have abused the special object by making it all-important. Consequently, they have desired to erase from the predictions of the prophets and from the instructions of Christ all that could not have presented a clear idea to the auditors who listened to them. But predictions

attain their perfect clearness only in the future; and it is of the future that Jesus in many cases evidently spoke. In all these cases the words of Jesus had a reference to future ages, and became much clearer after His resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit. Christ, therefore, frequently spoke with reference to the following era of spiritual illumination, in which the disciples would be able to comprehend what was then to them obscure.

§ 93. MEANS OF DETERMINING THE OBJECT.

The investigation of the object is a critical work, in which sagacity and good sense are of more avail than any logical process. A few practical rules are therefore all that can be given:

1. It is proper to take account of the traditions of ecclesiastical history upon the object of the New Testament writers. These traditions doubtless have very little authenticity, and should be received with reserve, but should not be entirely ignored.

2. Sometimes the author himself indicates his object, either at the beginning, as Luke in his prologue, or at the end, as John in the conclusion of his Gospel (John xx. 31), or in the course of the book, as Moses in Deuteronomy.

3. The study of the persons, the epoch, and the occasion will be found very useful in the determination of the object. There are three elements or factors which go to make up the object. The sacred writers must have been influenced, partially at least, in their choice of an object, by the sentiments and character of the persons to whom they wrote, and by the position and circumstances in which they were found. These points,

or any two of them at least, having been once discovered, the object is also determined.

4. These suggestions are useful in solving the question of the external objects. There is sometimes also an internal object, which can only be revealed by the attentive reading of the book. The careful and comparative reading of the Bible, the meditation upon the successive details, are therefore the fourth and most important rule.

In the books which have a marked degree of order and profundity, the object is discoverable by the method and organic character of the whole. Examples may be found in Job, the Epistle to the Romans, and in that to the Hebrews. But in the more popular and poetical books the object is more special and more variable. In such a case the details must betray the real object—sometimes by their analogy and sometimes by their contrasts. The object of the book of Ruth is found in the final genealogy (iv. 17–22); that of the apologue of Jonah appears in the divine ἐπιμύθιον which terminates it (iv. 10, 11). The book of James is immethodical, but the attentive reader can discover the object by noticing that the sacred writer mentions again and again, under various forms and with different applications, the self-same opposition, viz, that between the profound religious feeling which is the sovereign of the heart and life, and the superficial religion of intellectual belief and of nominal Christians.

The comparison of one book with other analogous sacred books is often of great benefit in determining the object. This is an essential element in the analytical study of the Bible.

We have before shown how the comparison of John's gospel with the synoptical gospels reveals the supple-

mentary object of the former. The comparison of Leviticus and Deuteronomy renders manifest the ecclesiastical object of the one and the parenetical and popular object of the other. The comparison of the books of Kings and of those of Chronicles demonstrates better than anything else the sacerdotal object of the latter and the prophetical object of the former.

PART FOURTH.

SCRIPTURAL HERMENEUTICS.*

§ 94. GENERALLY CONSIDERED.

SCRIPTURAL Hermeneutics is the complement of Historical Hermeneutics. The latter investigates either in an *a priori* manner, or in the books themselves, what are the external circumstances, which have exerted an influence upon the language of the sacred authors. The former studies in an *a posteriori* manner, the entire Bible, in order to deduce principles by the aid of which to discover the thought of the Spirit.

The resources that Scriptural Hermeneutics furnishes to the interpreter may be embraced under five different heads:

1. The context, which has for its nature the logical and psychological nature of the instruction.

2. *The Analogy of Faith*, which has for its principle the general unity of biblical instruction.

3. *The Parallels of Ideas*, which have for their principle the constant identity of instruction.

4. *The Special Study* of each sacred book, which has for its principle the individuality of each author.

5. *The Moral and Intellectual Character* of the Bible,

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* Prof. Cellerier denominates this part of his treatise "Herméneutique Scriptuaire," *i. e.*, Scriptuary Hermeneutics, or Hermeneutics more peculiarly Biblical. The term *Scriptural* does not correspond exactly to the French word *Scriptuaire*; but we have adopted it, because "Scriptuary" is not used in English.

which has for its principle the sanctity and wisdom of the instruction.

We will examine separately the value and limits of each principle, and of the method which is connected therewith; contenting ourselves, however, with what has already been said of the context in Historical Hermeneutics.

SECTION FIRST.

ANALOGY OF FAITH.

§ 95. ITS NATURE AND PRINCIPLE.

THE method of interpretation called Analogy of Faith, appeals to the general character of scriptural truth for the explanation of a special passage. This method rests upon the principle of the inspired unity of the revelation deposited in the sacred books. This unity is at once the result and a strong proof of the inspiration of the Bible. The Analogy of Faith is therefore an inspired means of interpretation.

Some have objected to this method of interpretation, supposing it to involve an *argumentum in circulo.* They have understood it as explaining each passage by the general tone of the Bible, and determining this general tone by the explained passages themselves. It is true that many interpreters, using this method without logic and judgment, have merited this reproach and have brought the Analogy of Faith into discredit by their exaggerations and abuse. But the fault is in them, not in the method. The Bible contains a vast number of clear and precise passages which have no need of the Analogy of Faith in order to be explained.

These are the declarations which, by their clearness, their number, their importance, and their accord have constituted the Analogy of Faith. But outside of these there are many passages, more or less obscure and doubtful, which ought to be, and can be within certain limits, and with certain precautions, explained by the Analogy

of Faith thus constituted. Such is the true method which we are prepared to defend. With this in view we shall investigate the *conditions* of the legitimacy of the Analogy of Faith, then its special *utility*, concluding with some consequences.

A. CONDITIONS.

It is very important to investigate the conditions of the Analogy of Faith, since this method is open to much vagueness and abuse. The interpretation founded upon the Analogy of Faith is simply a probability, which, however, may be advanced almost to a certainty. In this probability there are different degrees, which we will endeavor to enable the interpreter to distinguish. This whole investigation must be subject to the rules of probability, and must be developed in the same successive manner.

There are two principles, by which the different degrees of the Analogy of Faith may be graduated: (*a*). The character, more or less biblical and immediate, of the Analogy of Faith: and (*b*). The more or less evident character of the Analogy of Faith, when found to be sufficiently biblical and immediate.

1. GRADATION PERTAINING TO THE BIBLICAL AND IMMEDIATE CHARACTER OF THE ANALOGY OF FAITH.

§ 96. SUPERIOR DEGREES.

In the Analogy of Faith there are, according as it is deduced more or less immediately from the sacred books, many different degrees as to force and value. It is possible to distinguish four of these degrees, two of which are superior and worthy of confidence, and two of which are inferior, having really no proper right to the

name of Analogy of Faith. In this treatise the former will be called Positive Analogy and General Analogy, and the latter, Deduced Analogy and Imposed Analogy.

(*a*). *Positive Analogy.*—Thus we designate the analogy which is positively and immediately founded upon scriptural teachings. This superior degree is attainable only by the collection of a large number of positive and unanimous passages. When such a collection is possible, the interpreter may be certain, not only that such a truth is taught in the Bible, but that the biblical writers have placed importance upon teaching it, and presented it as a truth of superior order. It is upon such an Analogy of Faith that the first truths of Revelation rest, as the existence of God, Providence, future life and retribution, sin, pardon, and the gift of the Saviour. This degree of analogy is simply the positive and general teaching of Scripture. Thus it is placed above all controversy.

(*b*). *General Analogy.*—This may be designated the analogy which is deduced, not as the preceding degree, from the very letter of many unanimous passages, but from their object, their tendency, and the religious impression that they leave upon mankind.

The object and tendency of the sacred writings are very important and may be easily determined. Important, because in them is revealed the will of God; easy to be determined, because scriptural truth is made so plain in its general aspects that "the wayfaring man though a fool, need not err therein."

The New Testament produces upon all attentive readers the same general impression, and the mind instinctively declares against anything which is out of harmony with this general tendency. No one can fail to be struck by the perseverance of our Saviour in combating and extirpating formalism; in purifying the worship of His disciples, the Sabbath, charity and prayer from this

vicious principle. From this it is evident that the merely formal fast and routine religion, which were before discountenanced by Isaiah, had in the eyes of Jesus no importance.

General Analogy, when it is supported upon the positive and constant tendencies of Scripture, has, therefore, a real value as a hermeneutical instrument. It can legitimately be called Analogy of Faith. Nevertheless, it will be understood that the evidence which is thus derived is inferior to that of the first degree. There is a chance of error in appreciating biblical tendencies. An element of reasoning must enter into the discovery of this general analogy, and therefore error may creep in.

§ 97. INFERIOR DEGREES.

The deduced and imposed analogies which form the inferior degrees are, in our opinion, unworthy the name of Analogy of Faith. They are not without a certain value, but this value is of another, and much less influential, nature. They are mentioned here, because they have so generally usurped the name of Analogy of Faith, and placed this name in bad repute. It is important, after having investigated and circumscribed the true method, to distinguish it clearly from that which has rendered it suspected, and to show whence have arisen the abuses and errors with which it has often been charged.

(*c*). *Deduced Analogy.*—This method, having deduced, by a train of reasoning, the logical consequences of the universal and positive teaching of Scripture, demands for these consequences the same degree of authority as for the biblical instruction itself. It is evident that this method is without foundation, for it takes for granted the infallibility of the reasonings which connect the con-

sequences with their sources. These reasonings may be just or false, but are always human, and, as such, doubtful or at least debatable. They are theological systems, but by no means the Analogy of Faith.

The longer and more complicated the chain of reasoning which separates the deduced consequences from the scriptural teaching, the greater, of course, will be the danger of error; and the more likely will those deduced consequences be called in question as having no foundation.

An example of this false reasoning may be found in the method adopted by the Roman Church to prove its infallibility. The several steps in the argument are as follows:

God has given a Revelation for the purpose of saving mankind. (Analogy of Faith, first degree).

Therefore He watches over the preservation of this Revelation and the Church. (This consequence has some value, because it is not the result simply of reasoning, but rests, also, upon the second degree of analogy).

Therefore Christ preserves the Church from error. (Here we are in the third degree, having a conclusion entirely human and partially erroneous).

Therefore Christ has instituted a visible and infallible authority in order to prevent error.

Therefore the Pope and the Bishops are the depositaries of this authority.

It is evident that the more this style of reasoning is prolonged, the less it presents of the guarantees of truth. At the point to which we have brought it, it includes nothing which deserves to be called Analogy of Faith.

(*d*). *Imposed Analogy.*—This last degree has received the name of Analogy of Faith simply by sufferance. This method is founded, not upon the truth of the Bible, but upon the faith of the Church. It pretends to

legitimize an interpretation by the official character of the doctrine which would result therefrom. Thus understood, Analogy of Faith signifies the Analogy of the Confessions of Faith, and has simply the value that these confessions themselves may have. This method has simply the value of a probability. It is probable that the antiquity, continuity, and universality of an interpretation are sufficient guarantees of its justness. This method has, thus, a certain value, but does not deserve to be ranked with the superior degrees of the Analogy of Faith.

2. GRADATION PERTAINING TO THE EVIDENCE OF THE ANALOGY OF FAITH.

§ 98. NUMBER, UNANIMITY, CLEARNESS, DISTRIBUTION.

The Analogy of Faith, although immediate and scriptural, will not always have the same degree of evidence and the same authority. This evidence and this authority vary according to the number, unanimity, clearness, and distribution of the passages upon which they are founded.

(*a*). *Number.* — This consideration is fundamental, since the true Analogy of Faith rests upon the habitual teaching of Scripture. There is no doubt that a divine certainty is attached to every positive and precise declaration of Scripture; but something more is necessary to form the Analogy of Faith. A frequent and even constant repetition is necessary. One obscure passage might overbalance one clear passage, but could never gainsay the evidence derived from a dozen clear statements. It is evident that the Analogy of Faith is stronger for the existence of God than for the personality of the Holy Spirit. This is, however, no sufficient reason for doubting the latter truth, but the analogy which supports it is wanting in the point of number.

(*b*). *Unanimity.*—The same considerations apply to the unanimous accord of the passages which speak of a certain subject. It is evident that the value of an Analogy of Faith depends largely upon the constancy with which the same doctrine is presented under the same phase by a number of passages. From this point of view the universality of sin rests upon an analogy much stronger than that of the inability of man.

(*c*). *Clearness.*—Little need be said upon this point, for the preceding discussion has rendered unnecessary any formal urging of this idea. It must be evident to every one that the Analogy of Faith will have a value proportionate to the clearness of the passages upon which it is founded.

(*d*). *Distribution.*—This consideration involves some questions which are more delicate and less universally admitted. It is connected with the difference of individuality among the sacred authors, and with the distinction to be made between their missions. The importance of the Analogy of Faith will be according as a truth is clearly deduced from almost all the sacred books, or only from certain ones, or even from one only; from the Old and New Testaments or only from one; from authors removed from each other by centuries, by position or by the kind of writing, or only from authors of the same times and of the same character. Whatever may be the inspired authority of the Epistles of Paul, an Analogy of Faith resting on these Epistles alone would have less force than one supported also by the Catholic Epistles and the Gospels. The wider the distribution of passages the stronger will be the Analogy of Faith.

B. REAL UTILITY OF THE ANALOGY OF FAITH.

§ 99. GENERAL UTILITY.

That the Analogy of Faith has been perverted and misapplied, does not detract from the real force of this method when properly employed. In the superior degrees it renders two general services, which could not be expected from any other resource.

1. It proves the true interpretation of a passage, in a manner peculiarly satisfactory to the mind, by using the whole Bible as a commentary. It thus binds the details to the general teaching, and sheds light upon the latter as well as the former. Therefore, as far as the superior degrees are concerned, there is very little danger of mistake. The interpretation thus sustained presents a character of universality, constancy, and certainty, that is particularly precious to all those who seek the truth in the Bible.

2. Analogy of Faith, moreover, enables the student to arrange the teachings of Scripture as to their relative importance. While all the deliverances of the Bible are equally inspired, there seems to be a difference in the mind of the Spirit as to their relative value to the wants of man. Some doctrines are repeated again and again; some truths are clearly and frequently affirmed, while others are simply referred to in passing. The Analogy of Faith enables one to distinguish the proper place of each idea in the counsels of God and His designs in reference to man.

§ 100. SPECIAL UTILITY.

The result of this light thrown upon the general teaching of Scripture by the Analogy of Faith, is the reflection of a certain portion of it upon the detailed truths and isolated passages.

There are, among others, two particular advantages gained by the Analogy of Faith.

(*a*). The mistakes which spring from biblical anthropomorphisms and expressions which are foreign to our present customs, are thus removed. The human mind has a particular tendency to attach itself to the unimportant details, many of which are found in the anthropomorphic and popular language of the Bible. The Analogy of Faith prevents us from attributing to God the organs and propensities of man. The Bible states here and there that God repents; that He is angry; that He has eyes, ears, and hands; but the Analogy of Faith is present to prevent any mistake, for it proclaims God's spiritual and infinite nature. It also enables us to forget the physical elements in the parables, for example, by bringing into prominence the spiritual significance of the same.

(*b*). The Analogy of Faith, moreover, enables us to subordinate certain historical facts, certain mysterious dispensations of providence, to the incontestable purity of the Divine attributes; and thus enables us to bring the general course of history into complete harmony with the beneficent nature of God.

A final caution must be indicated against the employment of the inferior degrees for the superior, in the hermeneutical use of the Analogy of Faith. The Jews condemned Jesus to death in the name of a pharisaical Analogy of Faith, based, not upon Scripture, but upon the deductions that the Pharisees made from it. Their example has been often and sadly imitated by Christians.

C. CONSEQUENCES.

§ 101. HERMENEUTICAL CONSEQUENCES.

A few principles, worthy of attention, may be mentioned as deducible from the preceding discussion.

A doctrine clearly supported by the Analogy of Faith, can not be contradicted by a contrary and obscure passage. The seeming disagreement between the two can be reconciled only by careful study, if at all; but the preference must always be given to the truth supported by the Analogy of Faith. An example may be found in the supposed impeccability of believers, founded as some think, upon 1 John iii. 6: "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not." The literal sense here is contradicted by the Analogy of Faith, as also by a passage in the same epistle (1 John i. 8–10, and ii. 1).

2. An isolated passage if it is neither supported nor contradicted by the Analogy of Faith can, according to the circumstances of clearness, precision, and the context, be understood as positively teaching a doctrine, although that doctrine can not have the force of one founded upon analogy.

3. When a doctrine is supported only by an isolated passage, and meets with no countenance from the Analogy of Faith, it ought to be suspected, and very probably the passage should be otherwise interpreted. Thus the Roman Church has no right to found upon James v. 14–16, two new sacraments, absolutely foreign to the rest of the New Testament. It is evident that if the writer were speaking of two real sacraments instituted by Christ, they would be mentioned elsewhere in the sacred volume.

§ 102. DOCTRINAL CONSEQUENCES.

The Analogy of Faith sometimes supports doctrines which are seemingly contradictory. These doctrines are often equally important by reason of their consequences and the abundance and clearness of the passages upon which they rest. What shall an interpreter do in such a case? He generally accepts one of the doctrines and con-

tests the other by appealing to his logic and availing himself of fanciful exegesis. From the principles that have been laid down, the two following conclusions may be deduced: (*a*). The interpreter should recognize the existence of two opposite doctrines supported by exegesis and the Analogy of Faith. (*b*). It is proper to admit that there is between them, not a contradiction, but an enantiophany, and to seek the solution in exegesis, in the general spirit of scriptural teaching, and in the study of the human heart. This solution may almost always be found with time, labor, and good faith. But if it is not found it is our duty to wait, meditate, and labor still. If it is never found we are not permitted to deny the evidence in the name of logic, or to falsify exegesis in order to satisfy our desire of unity. The connecting links between the two doctrines may be concealed from our view, but if they are independently revealed in God's Holy Word, that should be sufficient.

SECTION SECOND.

PARALLELS OF IDEAS.

THIS subject has been treated of heretofore, but a few additional remarks are necessary, since this principle and its limits should be clearly understood before proceeding farther.

There is noticeable in the Bible a progress of Revelation from the rudimental books of Moses, to the fully developed writings of the apostles.

God has dealt with mankind as a father deals with his children, revealing to them ideas proportionate to their powers of comprehension. Moses was commissioned to deliver only the truths absolutely necessary for the well-being of the Jews. Additional elements of the divine thought were added from time to time by the prophets. A great advance was made in Revelation when Jesus appeared, giving clear utterance to the mysteries of eternity, which mysteries were formulated and revealed in their human relations by the apostles. But in spite of this progress, there is a fundamental unity in the teaching of the Bible, which is thus proved divine.

The parallels of ideas pertain strictly to these fundamental truths, which are woven into the whole texture of Revelation. The value of this method of interpretation, therefore, is made up of two facts: (*a*) the universal occurrence of certain great truths in Scripture, and (*b*) the greater and clearer development of these truths in some portions of the Bible than in others. The comparison of several parallels of ideas presents the same idea

under different forms of expression and in different stages of development—hence its utility in the science and practice of interpretation.

The task to be attempted in this connection is threefold :

1. To classify and graduate the several categories of parallels.

2. To appreciate the real utility to be derived therefrom.

3. To indicate the rules to be employed and the precautions to be taken in studying parallels of ideas.

A. CLASSIFICATION AND GRADUATION OF THE PARALLELS OF IDEAS.

§ 103. NECESSITY AND PRINCIPLE OF THIS CLASSIFICATION.

All the biblical passages, although analogous and parallel, can not be employed with the same security and force. What has been said of the progress in revelation demonstrates that there must be some difference in their availability. Some principle of classification is therefore necessary to serve as a touchstone by which to test the value of the different passages.

The employment of parallels rests upon a calculation of probability. It is probable that two biblical passages, possessing a certain analogy as to form, language, and matter, express the same idea; it is right consequently to deduce from the clearer passage the sense of the more obscure. This is the essence of the Parallels of Ideas. This probability must vary, evidently, (*a*) according to the number and nature of the passages, and (*b*) according to their distribution throughout the Bible. As to the first cause of variability no precise formula or appreciation can be given. Critical tact and judgment are nec-

essary in determining what value is to be given to the greater or less abundance of passages. We refer particularly to the rules hereafter given for guidance in this difficult matter.

But as to the second source of variability in this probability, viz: that which pertains to the distribution of the parallel passages, some approximation to definiteness may be made, and this we shall proceed to attempt. We shall appeal to the evident principle, that the more the authors of the texts compared were similar as to the individuality of their characters and the occasionality of their writings, the more there is of probability that the texts treat of the same subject and announce the same idea.

It will be observed that the classification of parallels should be made in the inverse order to that of the Analogy of Faith made above. In regard to the latter, it was taken for granted that the passages are parallel and numerous; here we must suppose but few passages, the parallelism of which is the doubtful quantity and constitutes the problem to be solved. In the Analogy of Faith it was necessary to affirm a truth from the evident identity of many passages; in the Parallels it is required to explain a passage from the probability of this identity; and this probability itself must be established. The Analogy of Faith is strong in proportion as the passages are *dispersed* throughout the Bible, while the Parallel Ideas are rendered more certain in proportion as they are found in authors of similar mental characteristics, and in books that treat of the same or similar subjects.

§ 104. ATTEMPT AT GRADUATION.

1. The lowest degree of Parallels will be composed of the passages taken at random from the Bible, without

reference to the kinds of writings, their epochs or authors. If, in this case, the truth examined enters also into the Analogy of Faith, this degree of parallelism will not be without value, for there will be a real probability that they express the same idea. But if the collated passages form no part of an Analogy of Faith this probability will disappear.

2. A somewhat superior degree will be composed of the parallel texts which have been taken from the Old Testament alone; but still with no reference to the writings, epochs, and authors. Here the probability will be increased as a result of the general identity of the provisional and preparatory revelation contained in the first sacred code.

3. A third degree will be composed of parallels gathered from contemporary authors who were not similarly placed, or who were similarly situated without being contemporary. The writings of the New Testament, when they are of different natures and of different authorships, pertain to this degree; also those of the Old Testament writers who, although not writing in the same epoch, have fulfilled the same ministry, as Isaiah and Ezekiel; also those of the writers who were almost contemporaries, although not receiving the same commission, as Ezra and Malachi.

4. A superior category still will include the writers who were contemporaneous and similarly situated, as Isaiah and the prophets of his epoch, as Haggai and Zephaniah, as St. Peter and St. Paul.

5. Still higher must be placed the parallels taken from the different writings of the same author; as from the Epistle to the Romans, and the pastoral Epistles. To this category may be referred the discourses of Jesus reported in the different Gospels. .

6. The next highest degree will be composed of the

parallels collected from the same writings, or from the different analogous writings of the same author, as from the different Psalms of David treating of the same subject, or from the pastoral Epistles. To this degree may be referred the discourses of Christ reported in the same Gospel.

7. The highest degree of probability may be attached to the parallels taken from the same part of the same writing, and, in reference to the discourses of Christ, from the same portion of the same Gospel.

If it is desired to press this climax still farther to a degree of probability yet superior, this subject will terminate in the context. The parallels of ideas contained in a single context combine the probability of the parallels and the certainty of the context. The great utility of the latter instrument of interpretation will thus be manifest.

B. APPRECIATION OF THE UTILITY OF PARALLELS.

§ 105. CONSIDERED GENERALLY.

The comparison of parallel passages is singularly attractive to the interpreter. There is much danger of its being erroneously employed by the student unacquainted with the science of correct interpretation and not given to critical habits. There is something very attractive and animating in this comparison of two distinct passages, which are dissimilar in appearance, and yet, on being united are found to be inspired by the same thought and to render testimony to the same truth. This discovery often acts, like a valuable and sudden acquisition, upon the heart of the interpreter, stimulating him to greater diligence and attaching him closely to so successful a method.

To avoid the great danger of mistake in the usage of

this means, it is necessary to bear constantly in mind that the parallels rest entirely upon a calculation of probability. This probability has force only in reference to the authors who are very closely connected, and should be esteemed important only after a careful examination of each parallel with the aid of the several contexts. In reference to the parallels of words, on the contrary, the probability is much more considerable, amounting almost to a certainty. This is because the repetition of a word in two or more passages is a patent fact, about which there can be no doubt. Moreover, there is always a strong probability that a word represents very nearly the same idea upon all occasions. But this certainty is wanting in regard to the Parallels of Ideas, and thus the employment of this species of parallel often conduces to error. Still this instrument, when cautiously and judiciously used, is not without great utility.

§ 106. PARTICULAR CASES OF UTILITY.

There are several detailed benefits to be derived from the study of the Parallels of Ideas.

1. The most common of these benefits is the explanation of obscure passages. This has, of necessity, been mentioned in the previous discussion. A difficult passage may be elucidated not a little by comparing it with another passage in which the same truth is more clearly or more fully discussed.

In Col. i. 20 the Apostle declares that God has been pleased to reconcile all things unto Himself "by the blood of the cross," "whether they be things in earth or things in heaven." This passage is striking—even surprising—and decidedly obscure. The same idea is found in Eph. i. 10, although somewhat more clearly affirmed and with one added circumstance, that of the

time in which this shall be accomplished. These two passages receive some additional light, although still remaining somewhat obscure, by comparing them with 1 Cor. xv. 23–28, where St. Paul describes the order of the resurrection.

2. The historical facts of the Bible are frequently confirmed and completed by the parallels of ideas. The incidents and recitals esteemed worthy of inspired record are found in different places in the Bible; hence there is opportunity for a historical parallel, or comparison, of ideas from which great benefit may be derived.

As an example of confirming the records of Scripture by this comparison, reference may be made to the three distinct accounts of the conversion of St. Paul (Acts ix., xxii., and xxvi.) These three narratives are not couched in the same terms, and each presents some special details. But between, and underlying, the three recitals there is a remarkable accord, all the circumstances of any interest being found in each, and the whole account thus deriving a color of certainty and exactness, which no one can fail to recognize.

As an example of the narrations being completed by the historical parallels, may be mentioned the incident of Mary pouring upon Jesus a perfume of great price, thus incurring the censure of Judas Iscariot at the same time that she received the praise of the Saviour. Comp. Matt. xxvi. 6–13; Mark xiv. 3–9, and John xii. 1–8.

In Matt. and Mark this history is full of interest and instruction, but both evangelists observe silence, perhaps intentionally, concerning the name of this grateful woman and that of the discontented disciple. John alone gives these details and thus completes the recital. He, moreover, by this very fact, causes the occasion of this action to be understood, linking it to the sepulture of Lazarus, for whom the perfume may have been designed.

This circumstance, also, explains the touching allusion of our Saviour (Matt. xxvi. 12, and Mark xiv. 8), "She hath prepared afore-hand My body for the burial." On the other hand, the first two evangelists alone give the important prediction of the Saviour in regard to the future celebrity of this action throughout the whole world.

3. The teachings of the Bible are also completed and developed by the parallels of ideas. We would naturally expect that a doctrine of any importance would be met with more than once in the Bible; hence a comparison of the parallel passages, in which such a doctrine may be found, will throw much light upon its true nature. These passages are mutually supplementary. The different points of view under which they present the truth; the diversity of the details thrown in; the metaphors employed and forms chosen in the several passages, are adapted to give a well-developed idea of what can be but imperfectly derived from a single passage. This development is, however, only attained in reference to those truths which are sustained and bound together by the Analogy of Faith. The analogy affirms and demonstrates them while the parallels explain and co-ordinate them. These two methods are, therefore, mutually sustaining and complementary. Together they may be safely employed, and will be very useful in determining the sense of Scripture. Studying the twofold nature of man, and the inward combat to which he is subjected by sin, we will find it of great use to compare Rom. vii. 17–23 and Gal. v. 17. In these passages the teaching will be found almost the same: although the first describes the combat much better, while the second defines it more clearly, connecting it with principles which lead us to victory. The comparison of the two is of great practical utility.

4. The parallels of ideas, moreover, enable us to estimate the certainty of the teachings of the Bible. These parallels, according to their number and unanimity, enable us to attach full evidence, or sufficient conviction, or great probability, or uncertainty, to the doctrine studied.

(*a*). Full evidence is attached to a truth which is sustained by many unanimous passages. Such a truth may be found in Rom. iv. 25, where Paul affirms that Christ died for our offences. If this passage was solitary, the truth would be surprising and difficult to be understood. But the same doctrine is frequently found (1) in the same epistle (iii. 25; v. 6, etc.); (2) in the other writings of St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 3; 2 Cor. v. 21; Gal. i. 4; Eph. v. 2, etc.); (3) in the other writings of the New Testament (Matt. xx. 28; John x. 11; 1 Pet. i. 18, etc.); (4) and even in the Old Testament (Isa. liii. and Dan. ix.) Thus we have for this doctrine, on the one hand, all the clearness and precision given by the method of the parallels, and, on the other hand, all the certainty produced by the Analogy of Faith.

(*b*). In other cases the parallels may be sufficiently numerous, unanimous, and clear to carry complete conviction to the mind, without, however, being sufficient to establish the Analogy of Faith. As an example, we may give what is recorded of the nature and effects of the Lord's supper.

(*c*). When the parallels are inferior in number, unanimity, and especially clearness, they can only bring to the mind a conviction of great probability.

(*d*). Sometimes the parallels render a service of another nature, by causing some uncertainty to remain around a teaching of the Bible. An example will best explain this idea. In 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3, Paul recalls to the Corinthians, as a thing well known to all the Church,

that the saints shall judge the world, and especially the angels. A parallel passage in Matt. xix. 28 teaches expressly the same truth, restricting the prediction, however, to the twelve apostles, who in the world to come will judge the twelve tribes of Israel. The positive and detailed tone of this declaration leaves us in doubt in regard to the reality of the instruction. Luke mentions the same prediction of the Saviour, giving to it, however, a still more metaphorical character (xxii. 30). To Paul's allusion alone we might attach a definite, although somewhat intangible idea; but a comparison of these several passages forces us to the conclusion that the truth mentioned is above our present comprehension, and must remain uncertain until we "know even as also we are known."

C. RULES AND CAUTIONS.

1. IN THE CHOICE OF PARALLELS.

§ 107. AVOID THE PARALLELS OF WORDS.

The parallels of words possess a certain utility, and even a great philological value. Reference has been made to them in Grammatical Hermeneutics. But their object, method, and use differ entirely from those of the parallels of ideas. Much confusion and mistake, therefore, arise from taking the one for the other. There is great danger of this error, since there is often a difficulty in distinguishing them, and a desire on the part of the interpreter to get light from what seems to be a reliable and attractive source.

The substitution of parallels of words for parallels of ideas is founded on the sophism that a given word always expresses in the Bible the same idea, in spite of the context and the subject matter under debate. We have before remarked that the probability is that a word ex-

presses a uniform idea. But the actual employment of a word may vary according to the context, which may declare it to be literal or figurative, exact or metaphorical, abstract or concrete.

This confusion of parallels may be so apparent as to excite attention, or so concealed as to escape notice; and in the latter case is particularly dangerous. A catechism of the Romish Church says that it is necessary to render worship to Joseph, the husband of the Virgin Mary, because in Genesis (xli. 55), Pharaoh said to the Egyptians: *Ite ad Josephum*, "Go unto Joseph." This confounding of a parallel of words for one of ideas is not alarming, since the error is so apparent to every one who has studied the Bible. But in many other cases of greater importance, there is danger of an adroit use of this sophism which will escape the notice of the interpreter and lead him into error.

§ 108. AVOID SEEMING BUT FALSE PARALLELS.

There is a further danger of mistaking seeming parallels for those passages which are really such. A common example of this mistake is in supposing that 1 Cor. iii. 16 and 17, and 1 Cor. vi. 19 are parallels of ideas. In both Paul affirms that his readers are the temples of the Holy Spirit. The former of these passages, being somewhat obscure, has been very naturally interpreted by referring to the latter, which is absolutely definite, and the conclusion has uniformly been adopted that, in both passages, the apostle styles the *body* of the believer the temple of God's Spirit. A close examination of the context of the first passage will reveal that he is there speaking of the entire church of Corinth, while in the second he evidently refers to a single believer. These passages are, therefore, analogous, but by no means parallel.

Similar mistakes are frequent in the theological writings of the day. Resembling phrases have been taken for parallels. Passages having merely an external and superficial relation, ideas expressed in analogous ways, and designed to be eventually completed and limited, must not be confounded with those repetitions of ideas, upon which valid arguments may be founded.

We have in history a singular example of this peculiar mistake. At the Council of Trent, one of the orators supported his idea of the communion, that it should consist merely of the bread, upon 1 Sam. xiv. 27, where the exhausted Jonathan is represented as eating a little honey without stopping to drink. The absurdity of his reference overthrew the force of his argument. Two additional examples, which are not so apparently absurd, and therefore more to be feared, may be sufficient on this point. The evangelist John (i. 3) affirms that all things were made by the Logos, or the Word—by which expression it is easy to recognize the divine Saviour. Some have adduced as proof of this statement the supposed parallel in those words of the Psalmist (Ps. xxxiii. 6): "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made." This is to misconceive the sense and the context of this last passage, which makes allusion to those remarkable words in the first chapter of Genesis: "God said, 'Let there be light and there was light.'" Yet while there is obvious allusion to the history of the creation in Genesis, at the same time it may not be a mere fortuitous coincidence that the term "word," used in the Psalm, is employed in Scripture to designate the second person of the Godhead.

The other example is derived from the Lord's Prayer. The Saviour teaches us to say to the Father: "Give us this day our daily bread." This prayer, however, appears too vulgar or casual to some men, who seem to

think themselves wiser than the God of nature and providence. They prefer to understand this petition as referring to the gift of the Holy Spirit. This unjustifiable idea they endeavor to establish in the succeeding verses (Luke xi. 11–13) wherein the Saviour teaches that, as earthly fathers give bread to their children, so will God bestow His Holy Spirit upon those who ask Him. Between these passages, however, there is simply a connection, without real parallelism. This forced explanation is contradicted by the double context, and is proved false by the fact that it breaks the sense and clearness of the teaching.

The true interpreter should be contented neither with slight appearances nor with vague relations. Before employing two or more passages as parallel, he should conscientiously assure himself of the separate sense of each, studying them analytically, carefully, and with reference to the context. Without these precautions he runs a great risk of teaching error and falsifying the word of God. He will not allow himself to be led astray by any pleasurable anticipation of surprising others by his brilliant parallels of divine truth.

2. RULES AND CAUTIONS IN THE USE OF THE PARALLELS.

§ 109. LOGICAL USE.

The parallel texts, when once properly chosen, and their parallelism demonstrated, must now be brought together and compared in a logical manner. Thus a prominent principle is reached, that the more obscure passage should be explained by the more perspicuous.

Although this principle seems self-evident, it has often been forgotten and even systematically opposed. Therefore it is necessary to present a proof, as nearly mathe-

matical as possible, of this almost axiomatic truth. Such a proof can be given.

The greater or less clearness of a passage is equivalent to a greater or less probability that the passage contains the truth. Any two passages in question are therefore represented by unequal probabilities which may be expressed in figures. To explain the more obscure text by the more perspicuous is to raise the inferior probability to the level of the superior, endowing the passage which, for example, has one-third of clearness to the three-fourths value of the other passage. On the contrary, to explain the more perspicuous text by the more obscure would be to reduce the superior probability to the level of the inferior, exchanging three-fourths of certainty for one-third.

An analysis of the causes which regulate the relative clearness of a number of passages will lead to the same result. The perspicuity and importance of a passage will be proportionate: (*a*) To the degree in which it is disengaged from foreign elements, (*b*) To the completeness with which it presents all the elements of the idea, (*c*) To the degree in which both of these objects are attained, and (*d*) To the correctness and regularity of the language in which the proposition is expressed. If these four principles predominate in one passage, and are almost excluded from another, the latter is more obscure and must be explained by the former.

This seems so evident that it may be asked: Upon what then can a person rest who prefers to explain a perspicuous passage by its obscure parallel? Upon the mistake that, as the obscure passage may be the more important, it is necessary to subordinate the less important text to that which is of more importance. To which we have two objections.

1. The importance of a passage is a variable quantity,

while the clearness of an expression is absolute. The latter can be established by grammatical and logical rules, while the former may be determined differently by each individual. Every student will measure the importance of a passage from his peculiar point of view. He will ascribe superior value to the text which sustains his theological system and is favorable to his polemics. Hence this principle is of uncertain application and is useless as a rule.

2. The employment of this principle involves an *argumentum in circulo.* If we analyze it we will find the following series of propositions co-existing in the mind of him who demands its application:

(*a*). A given doctrine is certainly taught.

(*b*). In fact it is proved by passage A.

(*c*). If passage A. seems to be contradicted by passage B. the latter ought to be subordinated to the former and explained accordingly.

(*d*). For passage A. is the more important.

(*e*). This superior importance of passage A. results from the fact that the doctrine which it teaches is, at once, important and certainly taught.

The absurdity of the opposing principle being thus apparent, we appeal with confidence to the rule that an obscure passage should be explained by one that is more perspicuous. Just here, however, it is necessary to investigate the true nature of that doctrinal clearness which is to be expected in the sacred volume.

§ 110. TRUE NATURE OF DOCTRINAL CLEARNESS.

Our readers have previously been warned against forgetting that there are necessary obscurities in religion, pertaining to the unknown and mysterious nature of revealed truth. It should be expected that this truth,

although revealed, would still retain certain unintelligible elements to us, as it pertains to an order of ideas which the human mind can not fully seize and human language can not adequately express. A religion without obscurities should be, on that very account, suspected of being both incomplete and human. In reference to this kind of obscurity, clearness of human language and thought can not exist. Our analysis and reasonings, deduced from natural notions and human facts, do not avail to explain the difficulties of which we have spoken, and no employment of parallels will be capable of dissipating them.

There are, however, certain obscurities, which arise from the incomplete, confused, complex, and figurative character of the biblical language, and these may in a measure be explained. This explanation should be derived from other analogous passages which possess the desirable clearness by reason of the positive, exact, and uniform language in which they are couched.

Clearness of language and obscurity of doctrine are often found together. Thus in 1 Cor. viii. 6, we find a passage which is at once perspicuous as an assertion, and obscure as a doctrine: "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him." This passage presents a great mystery in regard to the divine nature of the Saviour. But, at the same time, its positive and absolute character, and its symmetrical clearness, render it of great authority when compared with other passages on the same subject.

Take an example of the manner in which a clear passage ought to be employed in the explanation of an obscure one. In John i. 29, John the Baptist calls Jesus "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." This language is clear as to the removal of sin,

but obscure as to the mode, and obscure, also, as to the nature of the sins removed. It might be understood of sins past and pardoned, or of sins future and prevented.

Now St. John (1 John ii. 2) says that Jesus is "the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." This passage is clear as to the removal of sin, clear as to the mode, and clear as to the nature of the sins in question. But it is obscure as to the nature and extent of the expiation. In short, the first passage is obscure by reason of the vagueness of the idea, and the second only by reason of the mystery of the doctrine. Hence it is necessary to explain the first by the second, and not the second by the first, as one would be tempted to do if he should preoccupy himself with the obscurity in the idea of expiation.

§ III. CAREFUL AND JUDICIOUS USE.

What has been said is sufficient demonstration of the fact that parallels are often dangerous instruments, and of the prudent reserve with which the interpreter should make use of them. An extreme use has been made of them by certain old theologians who insisted upon the doctrine of absolute theopneusty. Taking every word of the Bible to be individually inspired they were accustomed to isolate a word from its phrase and attach singular mysteries to it. These mysteries were sustained by other words taken from other parts of the Sacred Book, and regarded as parallels.

Thus they were often led into error. Special care must be taken, also, not to be misled by the references found in our Bibles. These profess to indicate the passages parallel to the verse treated, but they must be verified critically and judiciously before they may form the basis of any interpretation.

SECTION THIRD.

SPECIAL STUDY OF EACH OF THE SACRED BOOKS.

§ 112. PRINCIPLE OF THIS STUDY.

THE individuality of the authors is the principle upon which this study is based. The discussion of this individuality will be found in Doctrinal Hermeneutics and must here be taken for granted. It is very easy to discover that the sacred writers have preserved their human characteristics to a certain degree, and these of necessity exert an influence (*a*) upon the language, (*b*) the method, and (*c*) the doctrine of the Bible. As to this influence upon language there has already been enough said in Grammatical and Historical Hermeneutics. The discussion here will be in reference to the influence of individuality upon the method and doctrine.

These two topics are related somewhat to the Analogy of Faith and to the Parallels of Ideas. This relation should be noticed just here, as being useful in the elucidation of the subject before us. The special study of the method and teaching of the writings by the same author can not, indeed, give us the general or biblical Analogy of Faith; but it gives the Analogy of Faith of that author, and this is of importance. It is even of much importance if the author studied occupies an extended place in the Bible. Moreover, the biblical Analogy of Faith results from the sum of the individual analogies of each sacred author. That this subject is related to the parallels, will appear when we remember that the special study of each book will disclose, place in prominence, and elucidate many analogous passages which, upon comparison, will be found to be parallel.

§ 113. THE SUBJECT DEVELOPED.

1. *Method of each Sacred Author.*—Under this general title may be grouped all the forms which are natural to an author or habitually employed in his communication of thought and emotion. His mode of reasoning and poetry, the outbreaks of his piety and the transports of his imagination, the nature of his deductions and polemics, are all influenced by his individuality.

In the study of the Old Testament prophets, for example, the interpreter who knows how to analyze their diversities and resemblances can derive much light from this comparison. Isaiah and Jeremiah are as much allied by the nature of their pious and devout minds, as they differ in the rich imagination, the simple and powerful eloquence of the former, as compared with the sorrowful and plaintive strain of the latter. No one can fail to note the difference between the studied style of the poetical and pathetic Joel and the unstudied manner of the animated and incisive details of Hosea. Similar comparisons must be noticed in reference to all the writers of the Old Testament.

The same is true in regard to the New Testament authors. The writings of James are characterized by profound thoughts, clearly-cut phrases, and severe forms. John seems to be raised almost to heaven in order to contemplate there the mysterious treasures of the life in God and to bring them thence to earth. How can we describe the style of Paul, with its wonderful variety, striking contrasts, and logical force! Every one must be struck by the extent of his thoughts, the directness and ability of his logic, the great elevation of his emotions, and his touching self-abnegation as being already dead and raised in Christ. The individual characteristics of

these, and indeed of all the New Testament writers, are necessary to a correct understanding of the Word.

An example taken from the writings of Paul will place this subject in its proper light. The ninth chapter of 1st Corinthians is a necessary link in a logical and compact chain of reasoning. The apostle concludes chapter eighth with this idea: You ought, in order not to scandalize your brethren, to renounce sometimes that which pleases you and which is lawful to you. And he continues in the ninth chapter, by enumerating the many renouncements of his rights—of which his life is the proof—in order to reach the conclusion that the Corinthians are bound to make for their brethren the same sacrifice that he had made for them. The reasoning is forcible and well carried out. But it is found that Paul, being indignant at the spirit of resistance and revolt manifested by the Corinthians, sets himself to defend the rights of which he speaks and which he has voluntarily resigned. He makes an attempt to shame the Corinthians and to justify himself. Hence the fundamental reasoning appears to be covered up by a different discussion, which gives to the passage an appearance of emotion, agitation, and complaint, of which the interpreter must find the key. This key is to be found in the careful study of the position and individuality of St. Paul.

2. *Instruction and Doctrine.*—The individuality of the sacred author exerts an influence also upon the doctrines he expounds. The grand theme of Paul and James is faith, and for this discussion they were chosen and mentally qualified by the Lord. Peter dwells largely upon the grace of hope, while the epistles of John, the loving and loved disciple, are filled with love to God and man. This influence of individuality upon doctrine, it should be observed, is clearer and more positive in the New Testament than in the Old.

The interpreter should, therefore, regard each sacred author from the doctrinal point of view which is peculiar to that author. It would be foreign to our purpose to stop to give any detailed suggestions in regard to these peculiar doctrinal tendencies. We must rest with having mentioned their importance, and having warned the interpreter not to ignore them.

SECTION FOURTH.

MORAL AND INTELLECTUAL CHARACTER OF THE BIBLE.

§ 114. INTRODUCTION.

A REVELATION from God must participate of His wisdom and holiness. The book which contains this revelation must be expected to bear the same impress. From this incontestable principle results for the interpreter a practical consequence, at once a rule and a means of interpretation. The attempt should be made to find in the Bible the moral and intellectual character which ought to characterize it. It becomes our duty to study successively the nature, the results, and the importance of this principle.

A. NATURE OF THE PRINCIPLE.

§ 115. ITS NATURE EXPLAINED.

It has been established in Psychological Hermeneutics that the interpreter ought to be convinced of the sanctity and divinity of the Bible. We will not return to the proof of this thesis, but will deduce this consequence that the interpreter may not admit any interpretation contrary to this character of sanctity and divinity, *i. e.*, to the moral and intellectual character that the very fact of inspiration presupposes in the Bible.

It may be objected, perhaps, that the Bible being itself the only sure rule of morality, the principal deposi-

tary of the truth, and the source from which sanctity has flowed upon the earth, there is no standard by which to test the Bible. Or it may be said that this study is simply the investigation of the Analogy of Faith, since the general teaching of the Bible constitutes its moral and intellectual character. Or it may further be said that this study gives the interpreter the right of weighing, not only the teachings, but also the character of the Bible by his reason, and thus conduces to rationalism.

In reference to this last objection we will speak in the sequel. The others will be answered by the mere explanation of the nature of this principle, to which we now proceed.

In the investigation of the moral and intellectual character of the Bible there is necessary something more than the Analogy of Faith, more even than the Bible itself. This something is the relation between this Book and the primordial nature of the human soul. God has so constituted man that he has in himself the general principles of morality, truth, order, and good sense. These principles are constant and uniform in spite of the infirmities of the heart and the limits of the mind. Our mental and moral constitution is such that we can not regard as coming from God that which is in direct opposition to these innate principles. It is true that they, in their turn, need enlightenment, co-ordination, restoration, and completion, and that they find in the Bible the light and truth necessary for this purpose.

This but confirms the necessity and reality of the harmony pre-established between man and God, between the conscience and faith, between nature and grace, between reason and Revelation. Whether man wills it or not, his reason passes judgment upon the Bible; and finding it conformed to the inner principles which he has received from God, he accepts and reveres it. But in

addition to this necessary action, there is a reaction of the Bible upon the conscience and the reason, purifying, regulating, and ennobling them.

This action constitutes the principle of interpretation upon which we are now engaged, while the reaction gives rise to the Analogy of Faith. This action and this reaction are of equal importance to the interpreter, and our duty is to insist upon both. If the student takes account of the first merely, he will become thoroughly rationalistic; if, on the other hand, he should exalt the second exclusively, he would annul or deny conscience. He would even deny the possibility of recognizing truth when God presents it to the world. We wish, therefore, to conserve both the divine authority of the Bible and, within its proper sphere, the reason of man. The study of the Moral and Intellectual character of the Bible may therefore be admitted into the number of the resources of Biblical Hermeneutics.

B. APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLE.

§ 116. GENERAL APPLICATION.

There are five elements in this intellectual and moral character of the Bible. They form five phases of the divine work. To these elements the student should pay especial attention, since they aid him to analyze and interpret the sacred volume. We can not here develop these five biblical characteristics, and must therefore be content simply to indicate why each ought to be found in a revelation from above.

1. *The grandeur and beauty of the Conceptions.*—It is evident that these should be expected in the Bible, since the conceptions are given to us as divine. The interpreter ought therefore to seek for divine ideas. This statement includes two distinct and important points: (*a*), He

must expect things worthy of God, by reason of their grandeur and beauty, and (*b*), things superior to the conceptions of man. This search, if well understood and followed, separates the student from rationalism instead of leading him to it. The reason of the interpreter ought to demand of the Bible both development and light. It would naturally mistrust a revelation which brings to it nothing new, and leaves it upon the earth to struggle always in the midst of human rudiments.

On the other hand, but for the same reason, it ought to repel everything which profanes and degrades the holy grandeur of God. It must not expect to find anything that links God's attributes to the follies of earth and the passions of men in the Book to which it comes for pure wisdom from above.

2. *Harmony.*—We ought to expect the harmony of the Bible with itself, since, in spite of the variety of forms, all its portions proceed from the same source. We should expect, moreover, the harmony of the God of the Bible with the God of nature, of the God who has revealed Himself to the heart of man with the God who has made the heart of man. This harmony is one of the most profound and undeniable evidences of the divine character of the Bible. To contemplate and understand this harmony is one of the greatest sources of satisfaction to the devout student.

This harmony of divine teaching is of great importance to man, since it alone can give him unity of direction and progress. Man is a strange amalgamation of a citizen of heaven and a dweller on the earth—he is at once a moral being and a product of material nature. Uniting in himself these diverse qualities, it is necessary for him to find a constant law, capable of directing him in a sure and plain path through the midst of these concentric but distinct spheres.

The three following principles result from the harmony between the Bible and nature, but they deserve to be mentioned separately as having each its particular importance and its special foundation.

3. *The Progress of Man toward his Destination.*—Man is at once imperfect and perfectible, mortal and immortal. The Bible which, in concert with virtue, proclaims him such, ought to give him a constant impulse toward the super-terrestrial and future destination implied by this remarkable state of things. Every law, therefore, condemning man to remain stationary, every interpretation that would confine him to the present and attach him too much to the earth, ought to be suspected by the interpreter.

4. *The Sanctity of Morality.*—This results from the essential character of sanctity resident in God, and without which neither philosophy nor faith could admit or understand His nature.

5. *The Happiness of Man by Obedience to God.*—This results from the divine goodness, which might be expected to purpose the happiness of His creatures; and from the divine wisdom which, their happiness having been purposed, must employ the best means of accomplishing it.

The interpreter ought, therefore, to mistrust every interpretation which would contradict, or be out of harmony with, these elements in the moral and intellectual character of the Bible. He should seek other more probable explanations; and if these are not to be found he should suspend his judgment. He should be willing to leave, without solution, the rare, and but slightly important, enigmas that certain passages present here and there in the Bible. To suspend judgment before great difficulties and between contrary, yet incontestable, prin-

ciples, is the continual lot of man upon earth; and the theologian should not forget that the same is often his duty.

§ 117. MODIFIED APPLICATION.

While maintaining in all its extent the general principle of the moral and intellectual character of the Bible, we should not forget that this principle is somewhat modified by the combined influence of the individuality of the sacred authors, the occasionality of their writings, and the accommodation necessarily inherent in their teachings. As a result of these causes we will find one doctrine brought into prominence in one book, and its correlative doctrine mentioned in another, which thus completes the teaching of the former.

The accommodation of the divine instruction to the infirmities of men will detract somewhat from the intellectual character of the Bible. That is to say, we will observe that the whole truth was not delivered to the Jews, that certain questionable practices were permitted in the infancy of the race. We will discover a cloud in the Old Testament thrown over the character and attributes of God. Here and there may be discovered, as Job says, only the "parts of his ways." Still these results will not detract in the least degree from the inspiration of the Bible; although the student, ignoring these accommodations and expecting to find perfect morality and teaching even at the beginning of the Bible, will be disappointed.

§ 118. SPECIAL APPLICATION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT.

In the teachings of the Saviour we may expect to find His human individuality counteracted by His divine nature. The influence of occasionality will be slight;

for although the Saviour couches His teachings in forms which are attractive to uncultivated minds, He nevertheless speaks for the entire human race. But the influence of accommodation may always be observed in the forms of instruction chosen by this divine Teacher. The parables and the allusions to contemporary events need be but mentioned to establish this idea. Still every utterance of the Master is designed to help mankind onward and upward in the divine life.

Wherever the words, conduct, and motives of Christ seem to be obscured, the Christian interpreter will apply this principle of accommodation. When the Saviour makes a change in His plans previously arranged, the interpreter will not transform this action into local and contracted views, or into an evidence of His mere humanity, as rationalists have done. The apparent indifference of the Master to the pleadings of the Canaanitish woman will not, from this point of view, be regarded as hardness of heart. When He declared (Matt. xviii. 17) that he should be regarded as a heathen who will hear neither his brother, nor the witnesses, nor the church, it can not be supposed that this is an authorization of malevolence toward an obdurate brother, or even of ceasing to wish him well.

In the writings of the apostles individuality and occasionality are everywhere visible, for the men themselves were not transformed into gods, nor were their writings indited without special reference to certain men and certain times. But there is here no intentional and human accommodation underlying their teachings, for what the writers could comprehend will be plain also to the readers. They spoke the truth as they knew it, and to God alone pertained the right of reserving the full manifestation of wisdom until the decreed time. The men, their times, and their divine enlightenment, should therefore

be taken account of when studying the moral and intellectual character of the apostolic writings.

§ 119. SPECIAL APPLICATION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT.

It is true also of the Old Testament that the individuality and occasionality are human, while the accommodation is divine. These elements are very prominent in the Old Testament writings, hence they must be studied carefully in order to appreciate the moral and intellectual character of that part of the Bible. The whole Mosaic legislation, all the ways, ceremonies, and rites by which the Jewish people were educated by the Lord and prepared to receive His Christ, are parts of a divine accommodation, employed by the Creator for the salvation of mankind. It results from this that the intellectual and moral character of the Old Testament should not be placed on the same level with that of the New Testament. The student ought not to be shocked by beholding moral and intellectual imperfections, which are not the result of any lack of inspiration on the part of the sacred writers, but have been permitted by God in order that His word may be placed at the very door of those whom He desires to enlighten and save.

Moreover, the several books of the Old Testament, in this respect, can not be placed upon the same level. In the books of Moses the accommodation is universal and systematized. In the prophetical books the occasionality is made more important and becomes the prophet's mission itself, while the individuality is veiled under their literary and poetical character. The poetical writings are so diversely affected by these qualities that it is impossible to distinguish the most prominent one. As to the historians the question is almost equally hard to answer. They were certainly inspired, and their mes-

sages are therefore authoritative. But there is much obscurity as to their dates, their characters, and the sources of their information. In this state of things, the interpreter should study these writings with a special reference to the intellectual and moral character of the Old Testament in particular, and of Revelation in general.

C. APPRECIATION OF THE PRINCIPLE.

§ 120. OBJECTIONS.

The principles which we have now expounded are exposed to dangers, and may become disastrous if they are not carefully limited. But if employed judiciously they will prove productive of great good in the interpretation of the Bible.

Just here three objections to this investigation of the moral and intellectual character of the Bible may be mentioned.

It is said:

1. That this principle is *à priori*, and consequently takes the interpreter out of his normal position and constrains him to divest himself of the impartiality necessary to his task.

2. That this principle is itself doubtfully and dangerously founded. It rests upon the rights of conscience and the rights of reason, and it is said nothing in the world has been more abused than these. Man is disposed to exaggerate these powers, and thus great injury may be done to the sacred volume. In fact, we are told, this principle is rationalism pure and simple.

3. That this principle has the extreme inconvenience of being neither uniform nor comparable. Each interpreter has a peculiar idea of moral and intellectual excellence. Hence there will be as many different inter

pretations as there are consciences, which can not be modified or harmonized by science or faith.

§ 121. VALUE OF THESE OBJECTIONS.

We certainly will not be accused of having weakened the force of these objections in stating them; but the answers to them are forthcoming. These answers are founded upon the facts and principles laid down in Psychological Hermeneutics and taken for granted throughout this work.

First Objection answered. Impartiality should not be confounded with indifference. The indifferent person is not impartial. In order to be a good interpreter there is necessary, at least, a certain degree of religious conviction and faith. In other words, he needs a conviction of the sanctity, the moral and intellectual excellence of the Bible, and a belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ. This conviction is the key to the Bible, and without it the hidden treasures of divine truth are never unlocked. Moreover, as a matter of fact, it is impossible to find an impartial critic, since every man occupied with the scientific interpretation of the sacred book has a previous conviction for or against it. Schleiermacher has truthfully said: "If the interpreter of the Bible is not animated by real affection for religion, he is almost necessarily influenced by sentiments hostile to religion." This results from the nature of the human heart. "The natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit."

Second Objection answered. There is danger of rationalism to one who adopts this principle; but there is no less danger in neglecting it. There is danger of infidelity if one neglects the moral and intellectual character of the Bible, because he does not believe it; and danger of religious fanaticism if one neglects it while believing

it. There is danger upon every side of the finite man, placed in a world where everything is to him bounded by his intellect, which is a source of imperfection and error. It is necessary, therefore, to point out the danger, but not to interdict the necessary use of the legitimate rights and innate faculties imposed upon man by his Maker. You must not desert the path because quicksands are upon each side.

Third Objection answered. The same answer may be given to this, as to the preceding, objection. We admit that there is an inconvenience in the application of this legitimate and obligatory principle. If inconvenience is a sufficient check, it should also be placed upon every intellectual and physical exercise of the faculties and forces of man. As a matter of fact, this principle must be used, and is used, uniformly by all Christian interpreters. The objection is not true that there will be as many interpretations as consciences, since all Christian minds and hearts coincide in one appreciation of this principle. The moral and intellectual character of the Bible is recognized in the same way, although with a difference of degree, by all. No Christian writer can be found who would seriously pretend that Jesus sanctioned a course of deception and unbelief in Luke xvi. 8, or that he really wished to teach that He would drink of the fruits of the vine with His disciples in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. xxvi. 29).

The employment of this principle is, therefore, as a matter of fact, universal and necessary. Even those who interdict it practice it, and it is impossible for them to do otherwise. Moreover, the abuses of the principle do not pertain so much to the principle itself as to the dispositions that some carry to its employment. Rationalists carry to the principle their rationalism much oftener than they deduce it therefrom, and the same is true of all extremists.

§ 122. LIMITS OF THE PRINCIPLE.

The danger exists; it ought to be braved and avoided. By way of summation, let us determine the limits of the principle, and seek the means to which the interpreter should have recourse. Three will be mentioned which have already been indicated or taken for granted.

1. The conviction of the weakness and fallibility of man. The human intelligence is so constituted that it can not resist placing itself supreme. This is a result of its very nature. It is also a consequence of its activity, its love for the truth, and its sensation of happiness when that truth is found. Yet this intelligence, far from having a right to command, is constantly mistaken and often loses that which is confided to its keeping. These are the facts. Hence the interpreter must recognize this human fallibility and learn to mistrust himself, to proceed with caution and diligence, and to esteem himself in fault before charging the Bible with inaccuracy.

2. The divine authority of revelation, which is at once the foundation and consequence of the divine character of the Bible. This authority imposes strong restrictions upon the exercise of the human reason in applying this principle.

3. The Analogy of Faith, which is the purest and most certain expression of the authority of the Bible. Whenever the interpreter is in perplexity, whenever there is an apparent want of harmony between his reason and the Bible, the Analogy of Faith should be consulted, and it will cause the right decision to be made. If the conscience is found in accord with the general teachings of Scripture, it may be taken as a trustworthy means of interpretation.

§ 123. CONSEQUENCES OF THE PRINCIPLE.

Two important consequences may be deduced from the preceding discussion :

1. The moral and intellectual character of the Bible must be taken account of by every reader of that book, whether he is conscious of it or not. He has the right to study the Bible with the aid of his individual conscience. Since consciences are different, each person will derive from the Bible truth which is substantially similar to the whole body of religion, but may have individual peculiarities of detail.

Therefore the diversity of religious views is a necessity of the very nature of our intelligence. Toleration is thus an act of justice, a recognition of the rights of others, a sentiment well-pleasing to God, who gave both the Bible and the mind to man.

2. We have affirmed (§ 116) that one of the prominent and necessary characteristics of the Bible is its harmony with the laws, the plans, and the benefits of the God of nature. Now the method we have expounded supposes this harmony, shows its action, and causes its necessity to be felt. The moral and intellectual character of the Bible is simply a corollary of this harmony and causes its importance, beauty, and reality to be known. The knowledge and contemplation of this harmony ought to be of the greatest value to the Christian, for it assumes his faith, purifies his mind, and is singularly adapted to elevate him into unison with God. It gives him the sweet and stimulating conviction that the Bible was made for man, and man for God.

PART FIFTH.

DOCTRINAL HERMENEUTICS.

INTRODUCTION.

§ 124. EXPOSITION OF THE SUBJECT.

We have indicated, according to our ability, all the means within the reach of the interpreter to elucidate the sense of the Bible, and to determine the meaning of its authors. But something more is necessary. We must endeavor, if possible, to discover, in the thought of the human authors, the thought of God.

Here the question of inspiration presents itself. This question lies at the very foundation of Hermeneutics; and without the discussion of it, the science would have neither coherence, logic, nor interest. It would resemble an edifice built upon the sand, easily overthrown by the flood, or the rude blast. In order to give solidity and completeness to the science, it is necessary to discuss the question of inspiration, at least in relation to its two principal elements—its reality and its extent. The third element—the mode of inspiration—which is more difficult and less fruitful in results, we will touch upon only incidentally. With the consideration of this element, indeed, the interpreter has not much concern; but a proper understanding of the first two is essential to the right discharge of his duty.

We have already indicated our conviction as to the reality of inspiration. We will now furnish the proofs of it, expound it methodically, and develop our theory

of it, which will involve the discussion of the questions of plenary inspiration and the individuality of the sacred writers, together with other questions connected with them. This part of our treatise will necessarily have many points of contact with Historical Hermeneutics.

Doctrinal Hermeneutics and Historical Hermeneutics are the two opposite faces of the same body, and ought to verify and illustrate each other. Inspiration is the thought of God communicated to man. It is impossible, therefore, that the interpreter who accepts this fact, should not ask: "What becomes of the thought of man?" This question Historical Hermeneutics endeavors to answer by examining directly the effects of the human thought upon the inspired writer, while Doctrinal Hermeneutics examines, in like manner and directly, the effects produced upon the same writer by the divine thought, and the degree to which this latter admits the presence and the action of the human thought. These are mysterious questions, and they may seem presumptuous. Nevertheless, they are necessary questions, and when properly treated contribute to faith and piety. A treatise on Hermeneutics can not omit them; for they form an essential element of the science. If, instead of proceeding *a priori*, it limits itself to the study of the facts, and to the deduction of their legitimate results, there is nothing in the task either rash or impossible.

§ 125. CRITICAL QUESTION.

Before we enter upon the subject, we must pause, for a moment, to consider a preliminary question foreign to Hermeneutics, and, in our opinion, to the theory of inspiration, with which some, now more than ever, persist in connecting it. It is the question of the authority of the Canon. It is the general opinion that the reality of

inspiration supposes the divine certainty of the entire collection of books in the sacred volume, and that there is an identity between the two following formulas: "The sacred books are the product of inspiration," and "The Canon of the Old Testament and that of the New Testament are as such and altogether the product of inspiration."

This is not the true way of stating the question, or rather the questions. They should be stated thus:

(1). Were the authors of the sacred books inspired?

(2). Is each of these books actually inspired?

The Canon is a necessary document, and its existence is of great value in resolving the second question; but it can not resolve it of itself, for it was formed, so far as we know, by merely human agents, and it rests upon historical proof. The human agents, however, were guided undoubtedly by Divine Providence, who has visibly blessed their work.

When we examine the Canon and its results, we can not fail to recognize this providential guidance with confidence and faith. The work of forming it, however, was only providential and not miraculous. Second causes acted freely, and human frailty was liable to err.

In this state of things the rights of criticism have a fair opportunity for their exercise. If Criticism is worthy of its name, if it combines impartial examination, love of truth, a profound religious and Christian sentiment with a philosophical method and extensive knowledge, it will render important service to faith by setting in a clear light everything that pertains to the Canon. The question of inspiration can only be freely and thoroughly treated by leaving the field free to inquiries of this nature.

As to ourselves, we have arrived personally, by examination, at the belief of the authenticity and inspiration

of all the books which the Protestant Churches receive as canonical. The Canon, as we have it, has come down to us attested, as to the Old Testament, by the Jewish Church, and as received in both its parts, *i. e.*, the Old and New Testaments, by the early Christian Church, both of which had abundant opportunities of proving the authenticity and inspiration of its respective portions. This is not the place for the evidence. It can be found in special works on the Canon.

§ 126. DIFFERENT METHODS OF ANSWERING THE QUESTION.

The hermeneutical question to be propounded is the following:

Are the sacred writings really inspired, and to what extent?

The orthodox generally answer the question thus:

The sacred writings are inspired, and their inspiration is plenary. According to the advocates of this theory, inspiration being plenary, the infallible thought of the infallible God is found entire in the infallible words of our sacred books. This answer is correct; but it can not be admitted on *a priori* grounds, either as to the nature or extent of inspiration. The facts of Scripture must be examined, and from them we must draw our conclusion.

Rationalists deny inspiration as contrary to the ideas which they form to themselves of the divine wisdom. Finding, as they suppose, errors of detail in the sacred writings, they affirm that, since their infallibility is not complete, they are not inspired.

Many theologians adopt an intermediate view. They hold that the Scriptures contain the word of God, but that they are not all equally inspired; that portions of

them were written under the impulse and guidance of that gracious influence of the Spirit common to all Christian men.

§ 127. THE TRUE METHOD.

In a matter so difficult, and, in a great measure, closed to our investigations; in an inquiry in which it is impossible to attain fully to principles and to judge with certainty *a priori*, only one method is possible. We must investigate all the facts, and then co-ordinate them to the best of our ability.

The facts are: (1) the testimony of the sacred writers as to their own inspiration; (2) the traces of inspiration which the Bible presents; and (3) the effects produced by the books which we hold to be inspired.

In considering these facts, we will consider in the first section the general proofs of inspiration, and endeavor to formulate their results.

In the second section we will give particular attention to matters of detail, for the purpose of deducing from them the nature and limits of inspiration.

In the third and last section we will offer some reflections upon the theory thus obtained.

SECTION FIRST.

PROOFS OF INSPIRATION.

§ 128. DEFINITION AND EXPOSITION.

It is necessary, at the outset, to define certain terms that have been confounded by writers on this subject. In discussions to which it has given occasion, this confusion has produced misunderstandings between different parties, or has led to defective reasoning by them. The terms that require to be defined and distinguished from each other are *Revelation* and *Inspiration.*

By *Revelation* we understand a direct communication from God to man, either of such knowledge as man could not of himself attain to because its subject-matter transcends human sagacity or human reason, or which (although it might have been attained in the ordinary way) was not, in point of fact, from whatever cause, known to the person who received the Revelation.

By *Inspiration*, on the other hand, we understand that actuating energy of the Holy Spirit, in whatever degree or manner it may have been exercised, guided by which the human agents chosen by God have officially proclaimed His will by word of mouth, or have committed to writing the several portions of the Bible.

According to these definitions, Revelation and Inspiration differ as to their objects, and as to their effects. The object of the former is the communication of knowledge; that of the latter is to secure infallibility in teaching. The effect of Revelation is to render its recipient wiser;

that of Inspiration is to preserve him from error in teaching.*

We are now ready to examine the proofs of the inspiration of the Scriptures.

A. PROOFS.

§ 129. ARGUMENTS A PRIORI.

Arguments *a priori* can not resolve the question; but they have their use and ought to be considered. Taken along with facts, they furnish strong presumption, in behalf of or against a question, and thus assist us in determining it.

We may safely affirm that the idea of revelation leads to that of authority; and the idea of authority to that of inspiration.

We address ourselves to Christian readers, who admit the reality of a revelation. Now, a revelation once admitted, the necessity of authority seems to us to result from its very nature.

(1). When we speak of a truth communicated by God, of a rule imposed by Him, of a divine precept, the notion of authority is inseparable from the notion of revelation in the cases specified. Suppose a revelation without authority: no more value, or certainty, can be attached to it than to a philosophy. Indeed, it would be no bet-

* Lee on Inspiration, pp. 40, 41. Hodge's Theology, Vol. I., p. 155.

Prof. Cellerier distinguishes between *Inspiration* and *Theopneusty*, making the former relative to the sacred writers, and the latter to their writings. By Inspiration, according to Prof. C., these writers acquired an increased knowledge of religious truth; by Theopneusty they enjoyed a special and supernatural direction, in consequence of which their writings possess an absolute infallibility in their least details. This, however, Prof. C. denies, and rejects the doctrine of Theopneusty as a grave error.

ter than a conjectural rationalism, or a variable and fantastic mysticism. Revelation, on this supposition, would be, so far as it is a supernatural communication, utterly worthless.

(2). Divine revelation having the sole end that we suppose it to have, viz, the happiness, the duty, and development of man, can not attain this object, unless it is accepted by him. This acceptance supposes an acknowledged authority, established by evidence—an authority which can touch the heart and conscience, affect the imagination, and appeal to the intelligence of mankind. Without such an authority, revelation can not accomplish the three objects which it must propose to itself, because they correspond to three great wants of men, which render it necessary. These objects are:

(*a*). *To give man a firm and well-grounded faith.* The heart and intellect of man have need of something else than philosophy. Philosophy interests, enlightens, develops, amuses; but it does not convert. Subjective feeling is doubtless necessary to a profound and firm belief; but authority alone can give it sufficient strength, definiteness, and certainty. This is true of meditative and reflective minds; much more is it true of ordinary minds.

(*b*). *To strengthen and raise feeble, sinful, irresolute, and suffering man.* If man has need of light, much more has he need of strength. This philosophy does not give, at least, to the masses.

(*c*). *To prescribe a rule to regulate his conduct and govern his passions.* For this purpose, authority is especially necessary. Morality, the influence of truth upon the conduct are insufficient, without a positive and certain authority, which says to man: "Thou shalt do this, thou shalt not do that." The proof of this is found in the universal experience of mankind.

(3). There is a third consideration, which seems to us to attach authority to revelation. It is the necessity of its efficacy, not only upon men at the time when it was given, but also upon men in the future ages of the world. Revelation being a supernatural means, can not fail of its object. To communicate it to the world, without power to preserve it, would be to deliver it to the passions and interests of men. Truth, it is said, once given to men, will make its way alone in the world. This is true, if it is preserved in a durable form, as in a book, or in nature, and is not fettered or smothered by human passions. Physical truth is interesting, since nature is uniform, and furnishes the proofs that are demanded of her; but it has no direct bearing upon the moral interests of mankind. Philosophical truth, which rests upon two immutable bases, the human mind and logic, struggles in the dark and makes little progress. Moral truth is continually opposed by evil passions; and if it resists, it is by the aid of the light and authority of the Gospel. If we deprive the Gospel of its right to teach and command, if we do not expect from it the regeneration and salvation of the human race, it would be an imposture and an object of derision. The testimony of the heart confirms this statement. We conclude, then, that he who admits a revelation implicitly admits an authority.

Before proceeding further, we must, for the purpose of answering some objections, indicate our views more clearly on this point.

At this time, more than at any other, some seek to exclude, in the name of the autonomy of the human mind, the idea of authority from Revelation. They continually repeat: authority is impossible, and the mind is so constituted as to reject it. In the last analysis, whatever may be the subject, man attaches faith only to that

which satisfies his intelligence, to that which is in harmony with his conscience, and to what responds to the wants of his heart.

The human mind, it is true, can not be forced, or the conscience obliterated. This we have fully admitted, when speaking of the general character of the Bible (§§ 132–141). But the question here is by no means similar. The authority that we find in the Bible, that we accept with the fullest conviction, and which we wish all to accept, is perfectly consistent with reason and liberty. It is nothing else than the impression produced upon an intelligent and moral being by a truth whose divine origin he can not doubt. In this there is no violence done to his faculties. The mind weighs that authority; conscience assents to it; and it is impossible to reject it, unless arguments of such force are presented as to prove it a mere fiction. It is a striking and luminous fact, which fixes the attention, enlightens the reason, dispels doubts, calms the passions, touches the heart, and consequently engenders faith.

Suppose that an individual comes and preaches to us a doctrine which professes to be divine; and that he assures us that it was received, eighteen centuries ago, from the mouth of a carpenter of Nazareth, a remarkable man, who called himself the Son of God. This doctrine, moreover, he assures us, has been preserved in obscure books, of more than doubtful authenticity, and full of fabulous legends mixed with truth, which books he urges us to accept. And suppose that in the name of the same man and of the same books, he exhorts us to resist the passions of youth, and to practice temperance, justice, and piety.

But the doctrine appears strange to us. We have not experienced the need of it. We have not the habit of self-control. The doctrine restrains and displeases us.

The result is easily divined. We will doubt the doctrine: we will rebel against its precepts; and we will soon cast off the very thought of such a religion without authenticity and without authority.

Let us now change the supposition. A new teacher shows us that the Jewish carpenter, His disciples, and the writers of the New Testament, had a mission and superior knowledge; that their teaching, instead of being that of ordinary men, our equals, was that of inspired men; and that their books were written under the influence of inspiration. From that moment, if convinced, our mental position is entirely changed. We become attentive. We are inclined to believe. We examine the books closely and attentively. This faithful, careful, repeated examination of them enables us to understand them, brings us to love them, finally to admit their authority, and to yield to it, provided we have no decisive reason to resist it any longer. God has spoken, we say to ourselves, and our reason, our conscience, submit spontaneously to that which seems to be, in reality, His language. God has commanded — we can no longer doubt it—and temptation is overcome. Authority, while revealing itself to us, has brought us to submission, changed, saved us.

We except, however, a single instance. If this authority should seem to sanction things unworthy of God, and contrary to His moral character; if, after the most conscientious examination, this incompatibility between the teaching of these books and the character of God, should become still more apparent, reason and conscience can not submit. Convinced that there is some error of fact, some misunderstanding of the sense, or some inexplicable obscurity, the interpreter will persevere and endeavor to interpret such things in harmony with the Divine attributes; and in case he fails, he will hold them

in abeyance until he receives more light, or reject them. In this manner, the human mind maintains its rights, and authority its place and mission. It is only in this way that authority can deal with a free and intelligent being. The Church of Rome does not view it in this manner; but the Protestant Churches do.

To recapitulate: the efficacy of the Bible is inseparably connected with its authority. Its authority is as inseparably connected with its inspiration; and this inspired, efficacious, divine authority does not deprive the reason and conscience of their legitimate autonomy.

Now, where shall we seek this authority? In men? in books? or elsewhere? In men? No: Facts prove that after the death of the Apostles and of their companions in labor, no man, no association, no succession of men received this authority.

In books? Why not? This is a natural means, and able to attain the object with less inconvenience than the preceding.

We possess books which profess to be the works of inspired authors, and which bear the impress of inspiration. If the inspiration of their authors is proved, we will find in them the authority which revelation supposes, and of which the world has need; an authority sufficiently strong and decisive in everything that pertains to the object of revelation, and the sphere of inspiration, viz, the salvation of man.

Shall we look for authority elsewhere than in men, or in books? Where then shall we find it? God can, without doubt, employ means of which we have no idea; but facts prove that He has not done so.

Within these limits, arguments *a priori* justify us in assuming, with a high degree of probability, the reality of inspiration.

§ 130. BIBLICAL ARGUMENT, OR THE ARGUMENT DRAWN FROM THE TESTIMONY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

We have in view, in this section, the declarations of the writers themselves, and the manner in which these declarations were admitted and accepted by their contemporaries and their disciples.

Let no one accuse us of the fallacy, called reasoning in a circle, when we appeal to declarations whose authority we are required to prove. We are not now speaking of authority. We confine ourselves to the collection of testimony which has a remarkable character of sincerity. The study of this testimony warrants us in affirming four facts fully attested.

First fact.—The Old Testament generally represents its authors as men who professed to have received a mission from heaven and supernatural knowledge, for the purpose of transmitting to men a revelation from God. No one can deny this of Moses and the prophets. We omit, as superfluous, the citations and the proofs.

Second fact.—The books of the New Testament affirm that Jesus Christ promised the guidance of the Holy Spirit to His Apostles; and that the Holy Spirit was, in fact, granted in an extraordinary manner to them and to their companions in labor. This fact of a positive promise given by Jesus Christ, a promise of the fulfillment of which they render a unanimous testimony, appears to us to be of great weight in the question.

Some have made objections to the view which has just been taken of Christ's promise. They have said that it was made only to the apostles, and that it can not be claimed for those writers of the New Testament who were not apostles. Others have said that it was made to all Christians as well as to the apostles; and

that in regard to it both Christians and apostles are on the same level. It has been said also, that it was intended for the apostles only when cited before tribunals, and had no reference to them as writers of the New Testament. It is difficult to understand these objections in the face of the declarations and facts which we find in the New Testament writings. On the authority of these we can affirm the five following propositions, which form five elementary facts:

(*a*). Jesus Christ promised to the apostles the aid of the Holy Spirit. See Matt. x. 19, 20; Luke xxi. 14, 15; John xiv. 16, 17—xvi. 13.

(*b*). He promised this aid as an extraordinary and special gift intended for the extraordinary and special times of the primitive Church. See the passages already cited from Matt. and Luke; also John xv. 26—xvi. 4.

(*c*). This promise was fulfilled in an extraordinary and special manner on the day of Pentecost; Acts ii.

(*d*). The extraordinary and special gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially the gift of prophecy, *i. e.*, of inspired teaching, were either given directly to the fellow-laborers of the apostles, or transmitted to them by the apostles themselves. Examine among other passages, and independently of the book of Acts, which of itself furnishes sufficient proof; 1 Corinth. xii., especially verse 28. Compare Rom. xii. 4–6; Ephes. iv. 11–12; and 1 Tim. iv. 14. See also Ephes. iii. 5.

(*e*). The Christians of all ages, since the time of the apostles, who have enjoyed the aid of the Holy Spirit, have never laid claim, when in the possession of sound reason, to divine inspiration, and to an authority like that of the apostles. They expect, and they receive from the Holy Spirit, holy affections and spiritual power, but not revelations and the gift of inspired teaching.

Third fact.—The majority of the writers of the New

Testament declare plainly and boldly that they were inspired. It is sufficient to cite Gal. i. 11, 12, and Acts xv. 28. No one can ask proof more positive than these two passages.

The life, the teaching, and the epistles of St. Paul prove abundantly that he considered himself endowed with the gift of divine inspiration, and that he vindicated his claim to it both in his speeches and in his writings. See, in addition to Galatians, which we have mentioned, 1 Corinth. ii. 12, 13; xiv. 37; xv. 1–3; Ephes. iii. 3–5. It is important to remark that St. Paul was not one of the twelve to whom the Lord Jesus Christ promised the Holy Spirit, nor was he one of the eleven who received Him on the day of Pentecost.

Fourth fact.—The claim of the sacred writers of the Old and New Testaments to a real inspiration and to an authority which flows from it, was admitted by their contemporaries and successors, and since the formation of the Canon of the Old Testament, the general admission of the doctrine of its inspiration by the Jewish Church is incontestable. Josephus and the New Testament attest this fact in the first century of our era, and since that time both Jews and Christians agree in holding the inspiration of the Old Testament. As to the New Testament, it is no less incontestable that the inspiration of its authors, during their lifetime, was never held in doubt. No one will deny that St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John were regarded as endowed with the special gifts of the Holy Spirit. No one will deny that these gifts were considered by the Church as evidence of the authority of these men and as a guarantee of the infallibility of their doctrines. Take, for example, what the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, in chap. ii. 4, where he rests the authority and infallibility of the first preachers of the Gospel upon the testimony of God

himself, declared by miracles καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου μερ σ οῖς.

The argument from testimony, furnished by these four facts, has great force. If any details remain doubtful or obscure, they are of less importance, and do not invalidate the chief points, which are clear, and firmly established.

When the Holy Scriptures render a testimony so positive to the reality of their inspiration, to deny it is not only to deprive them of all authority, but also to deny their historical value and refuse them credence. In this case, what else would Revelation be than a sublime philosophy encompassed with doubts and blended with old legends? How could the human mind acknowledge the Scriptures as true? How could the heart accept them as a rule of faith and a law for the conduct? They would have no interest for man except as furnishing a field for psychological speculation, mystical reverie, or the nurture of superstition. The first of these is without practical effect, the second is full of danger, and the third is opposed to the progress of man and the development of the Christian. All three vitiate the truth by an unavoidable mixture of error.

§ 131. HISTORICAL ARGUMENT.

We give this name to that argument which is derived from the history of the ministry of the sacred writers. If they were not inspired, there were certain circumstances attending their ministry which appear to us inexplicable. This argument has been less used than others in recent discussions on this subject. The reason of this is found, doubtless, in the fact that the writings rather than their authors were thought to claim attention. We, on the contrary, who insist on the inspiration

of the writers, and deduce from it, by way of consequence, the authority of their writings, attach great importance to this argument, which seems of a nature to impress impartial and considerate minds. It results from the four following elements:

1. The first is of great moral force; but in default of facts, we can apply it only to the apostles. It is the change produced upon their intelligence from and after the day of Pentecost. It is the extent of view to which these men were raised, who until that time were incapable of understanding their Master and His work. It is the strong, exalted, loving, sublime faith of these Jews and fishermen. Christ, by His teaching and His presence, had not, before His death, succeeded in completing their education for the ministry; it was after that event and from heaven that He qualified them for their work.

These men, whose slowness and stupidity sometimes grieved the Saviour, and astonish us when reading the Gospels, became almost, in an instant, the authoritative teachers of the human race, not only of their own age, but of all ages. Destitute of literary culture, their writings satisfy the most intimate and universal wants of the human soul. Their teaching is in perfect harmony with the mysterious world of the heart, into which philosophy finds it difficult to enter. Their divine philosophy lays hold upon and enchains suffering, sinful, penitent man; it consoles, elevates, and saves him.

Let no one say, as some have said, that this marvelous development of the intelligence of the apostles was, in this case, only the result of the development of their religious life, and that this was the development of their faith. Such an assertion only puts off the difficulty: it does not solve it. Moreover, it is not true that progress in religious life, however great, can explain so strange and so complete an intellectual transformation.

2. The second element of the argument drawn from the history of the sacred writers, is the union of enthusiasm with calm judgment and good sense, the complete absence of fanaticism in men who devoted themselves to suffering and death.

Under this point of view, it is interesting to study, in the Old Testament, the history of the prophets. In the New, it is sufficient to mention St. Paul. We have a knowledge of him from his history, and we have a still better knowledge of him from his writings. Of the numerous contrasts of this heroic character, there is none, on the one hand, so prominent and so remarkable as his continual suffering for Christ and his desire to depart and be with Him; and, on the other hand, there is none so prominent as his calm, judicious, deliberate mind, his prudence in danger, and his adroitness in avoiding it. We feel constrained to accept as the solution of this that St. Paul was under the special teaching and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

3. A third element of the historical proof is the success of the ministry of the divine ambassadors. All, from Moses to St. Paul, accomplished their mission, and performed a work, which, for the majority of them, was disproportionate, immense, and which, taken in all its extent, constituted a revolution unique in the history of the world. They often accomplished their work in circumstances the most difficult and by means the most improbable. Sometimes, men the most obscure, and, humanly speaking, the least capable, were God's chosen instruments. The maintenance of Judaism, until the time of Jesus Christ, and the establishment of Christianity in the Roman Empire, in the midst of persecutions and struggles, are facts historically inexplicable without divine intervention. And this divine intervention to which the sacred writers appeal was a gift of power and

of knowledge, which was given to them from heaven. It was, along with their power to work miracles, their inspiration.

4. The last element has some relation to the preceding. It is the impossibility of admitting the general proofs of revelation, without concluding from them, at the same time, the inspiration of the men who were its organs. This is particularly evident in regard to miracles, prophecies, the rapid and marvelous establishment of Christianity, and the sublimity of revealed truths. The development of this idea is superfluous.

§ 132. CRITICAL ARGUMENT.

We thus designate the proofs derived from the nature of the Sacred Books. We will indicate four.

1. The holy grandeur, the profound truth of the thoughts and precepts, and the lofty aims of these books; also their eloquent, vehement, poetical, and pathetic sublimity. These things furnish a strong proof of inspiration. They furnish the only proof which those who deny revelation, but wish to be considered believers, are willing to accept. But one can not hold the belief of divine revelation without holding that the men who transmitted it were inspired. Whence could they have derived it, and who could have given them the courage and the perseverance, the zeal and capacity to transmit it? Several of them, and these the most remarkable, were men without learning.

Those of them whom circumstances seem to have prepared for their work were not, strictly speaking, rendered capable by their preparation, of accomplishing their work. Moses owed much to his Egyptian education and learning; but that education and learning can not explain his marvelous work among such a people as

the Israelites, and in such a place as the wilderness. The profound sagacity, the remarkable unity, the more than human prudence, and the touching humanity with which his legislation is impressed, attest its divine origin.

Let it not be said, in regard to the New Testament, that the sacred writers recorded only the teachings received from the mouth of the Saviour, whose companions and disciples they had been. This is not true of St. Paul. It is not true of the special, detailed, and frequent applications of the brief, sententious, and general teachings of Christ, which the New Testament writers develop and specialize. They do not write as mere reporters.

On the hypothesis that these writers were not inspired, it would be necessary to explain how such men, destitute of learning and literary skill, became all at once so eminently qualified for the task committed to them.

Those who deny inspiration, deny more or less the authenticity of the sacred narratives and of the discourses contained in the Gospels. This course is logical and natural. The doctrine of inspiration is too intimately connected with the history of Jesus Christ, as recorded by the evangelists, to maintain the one and deny the other.

2. The general harmony which we observe between the Old and New Testaments, which obtains in each, and from which results the unity of the whole. It is difficult to procure harmony among thinkers and writers; indeed it is impossible. But in the Bible, we perceive a harmony, which, notwithstanding individual and temporary diversities, continued during centuries without any special institution designed to maintain it. This is not a proof logically or mathematically rigorous, but it is a phenomenon without a parallel, especially on so vast a scale.

3. The numerous biblical prophecies, whose fulfillment has been, or is still visible and certain.

This proof has been disputed by some modern schools. Of course the rationalists, who deny the supernatural, refuse to admit it. But the proof is so palpable that it can not be evaded except by the violation of the rules of fair criticism and of the acknowledged principles of historical evidence. It is unnecessary to refer to any examples, as the fulfillment of the prophecies relating to the Jews, to Jerusalem, to Babylon, to Assyria, and to Christ is familiar to every reader of the Bible and of history.

4. I mention, finally, not as a decisive proof, but as a striking and interesting fact, the struggle which seems sometimes to exist in the sacred writings, between the divine superiority of the thoughts and the relative incapacity of the language and of the writer. We find examples of this in certain prophecies, which present a striking contrast between the obscurity of details, and the positive evidence of the result. Another contrast is that which sometimes exists between the coarseness of the figures and the sublimity of the thoughts. Examples of this are frequent in the prophecies of Ezekiel.

It is unnecessary to extend this argument. It is not decisive; yet it possesses value, especially for those who are sincerely seeking for the truth, and who do not deny the supernatural.

§ 133. ARGUMENT FROM FEELING, OR THE TESTIMONY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

We mention this argument on account of the confusion of ideas connected with it. As a proof of inspiration it has little weight. It seems to us that three very different things have been included in it—things

which must be carefully distinguished, and which either enter into proofs already given, or are of no value in proving inspiration.

1. Ancient theologians employed it, not to prove inspiration, which no person then held in doubt, but to prove the canonicity of such or such a book of the antilegomena, or the authenticity of such or such a doubtful passage. They affirmed that the pious Christian received, in reading the book or passage, an impression produced by the Holy Spirit, which warranted to him the divine origin of the disputed passage. This is evidently an individual, hypothetical, subjective proof, and really of no value. Applied to inspiration, it would furnish an instance of reasoning in a circle; for to prove the inspiration of the sacred author, it would be necessary to suppose the inspiration of the reader.

2. Others have understood, by the argument drawn from feeling, the belief produced in the heart by the Holy Spirit, of such or such a doctrine. But this proof brings us indirectly to the books from which the doctrine is derived, and is liable to the objection stated above. It can furnish no proof of inspiration properly so called, that is, in the theological sense of the term.

3. Others understand, by the argument from feeling, the harmony which subsists between the doctrines of the sacred writer and the necessities of the heart. It is the consolation, the light, the strength, the energy, the repentance, which, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, rise in the soul moved by the reading of these doctrines, which are so well adapted to us in our miserable condition, and which respond to the most mysterious and most profound needs of the soul. All the voices of the soul are answered in the Scriptures. This proof appears to us to have great weight; but it falls logically under the first paragraph of the Critical Argument, § 132.

These are the general proofs of inspiration, which merit the serious consideration of every one, and which, taken together, are sufficient to produce conviction in the minds of all who admit the possibility and desirableness of Revelation.

B. CONSEQUENCES.

§ 134. GENERAL INDETERMINATION.

The proofs which we have just considered, sufficiently attest inspiration; but they determine neither its nature nor its degree. To determine these is of great importance in Hermeneutics. That task will now claim our attention.

Very different theories of inspiration have been held and are still held. The theory of verbal inspiration; the mystical theory which regards the sacred writers as passive, wholly possessed of the Spirit, and uttering His words in a species of frenzy; the theory of different degrees of inspiration, such as the inspiration of suggestion, direction, elevation, and superintendence; the latitudinarian and rationalistic theories; and the theory of mere gracious influence, have all had their advocates.

The proofs which we have just considered may be equally applied to several of the theories that have been mentioned. Those passages which speak of the gifts of the Holy Spirit do not decide the question, for we see them applied to capacities and endowments which are very far removed from each other, as, for example, the mechanical skill of Bezaleel (Exodus xxxv. 31), and the divine wisdom of our Saviour (John iii. 34).

The promises made by Jesus Christ to the apostles are indeterminate in some respects. When He said to them: "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John xvi. 13), it is evident

that many truths having no relation to Christian doctrine were excepted. We must also except the time of the Parousia.

We can not determine the degree of inspiration *a priori*, by the necessity of authority, or by our views of the Divine wisdom. We believe that God intended, and that it is necessary for the Church, that the books which form the depository of Divine Truth, should possess sufficient authority on all points connected with their object. But differences of opinion might exist as to the range of that object. Is it limited to religion and morals? or does it extend to every subject of which the Scriptures speak? Were the sacred writers infallible in every particular which they committed to writing?

The attempt to determine the degree of inspiration by our views of the Divine wisdom is equally futile. That wisdom has been manifested in giving a revelation to mankind. The nature and degree of that revelation must be determined, not by our *a priori* conceptions of what that wisdom ought to do, but by an examination of the facts in detail, of what it has done.

§ 135. CONSEQUENCES FROM THE PROOFS ADDUCED.

We have just said that an examination of facts in detail is the only method of ascertaining the nature and degree of inspiration. Before we enter upon that examination, let us inquire whether efforts hitherto made have put us in possession of any fixed and positive conclusions, which may serve as a point of departure in our investigation.

Do the proofs of inspiration which we have given, leave us in complete indetermination? or are we authorized to deduce from them any general propositions? Three propositions seem to us to result from the proofs

exhibited, inasmuch as they are logical and necessary corollaries of the very idea of inspiration. These propositions are:

1. The sacred books written by inspired men, ought, as a consequence, to possess an authority sufficient for everything that pertains to the object of revelation. Without this, revelation would fail of its object.

2. The Holy Scriptures, written, as we say, by inspired men, and intended to teach men the way of salvation, their duty to God and to one another, can not contain errors in regard to these matters.

3. The different parts of Holy Scripture can not have opposite aims. There must be harmony among them; and taken together they must constitute a regular plan. The Holy Scriptures present a series of revelations more or less partial and occasional, sometimes local and temporary, but always mutually dependent and forming a complete unity. Consequently we may expect to find throughout a single and a continued development. Each of the sacred books must enter into the divine plan, and contribute directly or indirectly to accomplish the final result. In short, all of them must form a harmonious and progressive whole, which must be of universal utility.

(*a*). *Harmonious.*—For, notwithstanding the diversity of occasional circumstances and of secondary objects, there can be no contradiction between these and the general plan of God for the salvation of mankind.

(*b*). *Progressive.* — This results from the successive revelations contained in the Holy Scriptures, and from the necessity of development.

(*c*). *Universal Utility.*—Although separate portions of Scripture seem to have been intended only for some men and for certain times, yet the universal utility of

the whole results from its harmony and progressive character.

Compare what has been said of the general character of the Bible, § 134.

§ 136. QUESTIONS TO BE DETERMINED.

Many questions relative to the mode of inspiration are probably insolvable. But this is not the case with those questions that pertain to its nature and degree. There are three questions in particular, the solution of which is important to a system of Hermeneutics. They are indeed necessary to it, and connect it logically with the doctrine of inspiration. These questions are:

1. The question in regard to the inspired person. Was he merely a passive instrument? or did he retain his *individuality?*

2. The second question has reference to the inspired doctrines, or truths. Did inspiration have, sometimes, besides its general object relative to the human family, a special object relative to times, to men, and to circumstances? In other words, is it consistent with *occasionality?*

3. Did inspiration extend to the absolute truth of the divine revelations, or only to practical and intelligible truth? Had it only relation to the conceptions of God, its author, or had it also relation to the intelligence and wants of man, whom He wished to instruct? Is it consistent with *accommodation?*

These three questions we will endeavor to solve by the facts of Scripture.

SECTION SECOND.

NATURE OF INSPIRATION.

FIRST QUESTION: Did the sacred writers preserve their individuality?

CHAPTER FIRST.—FACTS.

A. ANTERIOR FACTS.

We designate as such the facts relative to the origin of revelation, in contradistinction to posterior facts, or those relative to its results.

§ 137. INSPIRATION WAS IMPARTED SOMETIMES SUCCESSIVELY AND BY DEGREES.

The successive or gradual character of inspiration, in many instances, is clearly shown in the New Testament. As to the Old Testament, the facts of detail are not sufficiently known in order to allow a conclusion. But this is of little importance for the solution of the question, as the New Testament is sufficient for our purpose. In this we find the facts clear and positive in support of our thesis. The Holy Spirit and His gifts were given on many different occasions and in different degrees to the same individuals. We are informed, in Matt. x. 5–8; Mark vi. 7; Luke ix. 1, 2, that Christ sent out His apostles with miraculous gifts to make a first trial of their ministry. In Luke x. 9–20, we find mention of a similar mission. On another occasion (John xx. 22) Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, "Receive ye

the Holy Ghost." Notwithstanding this last act, the apostles were not yet fitted to accomplish their work; the great and miraculous effusion of the day of Pentecost was still necessary (Acts ii.) Finally, even after the day of Pentecost, the apostles understood only gradually the calling of the Gentiles (Acts x. 1–18, 44–48; Acts xv. 1–29). Moreover, the Epistle to the Galatians testifies throughout to the judaizing efforts to cause the Galatians to renounce the teaching of St. Paul, and to return to the yoke of the Law. Without doubt, these efforts, although made in the name of the apostles of Jerusalem, were neither directed nor approved by them, so far as we can learn from the record, yet as they were made by men who professed to be their followers, we may conclude that St. James and St. Peter neither taught nor understood the necessity of abrogating the ceremonial law. If this was the case, the Holy Spirit had not yet entirely enlightened them.

St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xiv. 1, 12, 13), teaches that the believer ought to desire, and that he can by prayer obtain, gifts superior to those which he had already received.

§ 138. THE RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE OF INSPIRED MEN WAS SOMETIMES ACQUIRED BY HUMAN MEANS.

This can not be affirmed of all the sacred writers, nor even of the greater part of them. We know positively the contrary in reference to the prophets and St. Paul. But, on the other hand, we know that it was so, at least with the sacred historians. Portions of Old Testament history are extracts. They contain genealogies and official acts carefully collected. We might adduce many examples by way of illustration; but it is unnecessary to go beyond the book of Genesis—a book, the inspira-

tion of which is attested by the most positive proofs. Though we reject the documentary and fragmentary hypotheses, yet we can not fail to recognize in it traces of anterior documents collected by Moses, and used by him in the composition of the book.

In the New Testament both St. Matthew and St. Luke doubtless copied their genealogies from existing documents. The latter, in his prologue, bases the credence due to his history upon his careful research (Luke i. 1–4). The apostle John appeals to his personal knowledge of the facts (1 John i. 1–3). It was the opinion of the ancient Church that St. Mark obtained the facts of his narrative from St. Peter. In these instances inspiration did not give directly the knowledge of the facts, but left the sacred writers to acquire them in their own manner.

We find in the New Testament something similar in regard to the acquisition of doctrinal truth. Before the giving of the Holy Spirit to His apostles, Christ labored long and carefully to open their minds and prepare them to preach His doctrines; and even after the Holy Spirit was given, we find that He did not "guide them into all truth" at once; but, as we have seen, led them into it gradually.

B. POSTERIOR FACTS.

Posterior facts are those which are relative to the effects produced by inspiration upon the inspired men—those which show the inspiration in the work, and which thus reveal to us its nature.

These facts may be divided into two categories:

(*a*). Historical facts relative principally to the writer.

(*b*). Critical facts relative uniformly to the writings.

(1). HISTORICAL FACTS.

§ 139. ACTIVITY AND LIBERTY.

Inspired men retained their mental activity and liberty. They were not passive machines, but intelligent voluntary agents. They were not pens, but writers. They were not amanuenses, but historians, poets, and teachers of doctrine.

We learn from St. Peter (1 Pet. i. 10, 11), that the prophets, whose mental condition under inspiration, seemed sometimes to approximate a state of ecstasy, were active in their efforts to seize and express the truths which they were inspired to utter. Their history presents them to us as acting, reflecting, and fulfilling a ministry, the inspiration of which did not interfere with their individual agency. We observe the same thing in the dogmatic writers What is there more free, more active, and more spontaneous than the ministry of St. Paul? What more carefully and ably calculated than his plans for the successive conversion of the East and West? When we see the Holy Spirit intervening in these plans, it is not to inspire them directly; but sometimes to suggest the idea indirectly (Acts xvi. 9, 10), sometimes to hinder the purpose (Acts xvi. 6, 7).

Sometimes Providence caused the apostle's purposes to succeed by ways wholly different from those which were projected by him. Compare his long efforts to accomplish his journey to Rome (Rom. i. 13), and the incident which decided it (Acts xxv. 11, 12).

The spirit of insinuation, the mixture of sweetness and firmness, the art of becoming all things to all men (1 Cor. ix. 22), which so eminently distinguished the apostle Paul, and which were so important to his success, were evident proofs of his free and active individuality.

We see the apostles at the very moment in which they declare themselves inspired, examining, comparing, discussing, and deciding as ordinary men. The Council of Jerusalem, after deliberation, prefaced their decree with this solemn formula: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and *to us*" (Acts xv. 28), a formula worthy of attention, since it unites in the same affirmation the inspiration of the apostles with their individuality.

We have seen, § 138, that the sacred writers did not attain all at once to a knowledge of the truths which they were commissioned to transmit to us. They acquired a knowledge of them gradually. Their minds were stimulated, developed, and enlightened. They were, therefore, neither machines nor passive beings, but active intelligences.

§ 140. UNCERTAINTY AND ERRORS OF CONDUCT.

What we have said in the preceding sections, proves temporary uncertainty and doubt. The Acts of the Apostles, however, do not leave us to inference. Take, for example, the history of St. Peter and Cornelius (Acts x. 1–11, 18). We refer particularly to the recital which the apostle made (xi. 5–17) of the successive facts, and the reasonings by which his conviction in regard to his course of duty was formed. The history of the Council at Jerusalem (Acts xv.) furnishes another example.

Inspired men were also liable to errors of conduct. It is sufficient to refer to the rebuke which St. Paul adminstered to St. Peter at Antioch (Gal. ii. 11). St. Paul's own conduct may not have been free from reprehension in the case of Mark (Acts xv. 36–39), and when he followed the politic advice of the brethren at Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 17–26). This, however, has no bearing upon the question of their inspiration.

(2). CRITICAL FACTS.

§ 141. ORDINARY TONE OF THE WRITINGS.

Critical facts are those which are relative to the nature of the writings.

The first critical fact that strikes us is the ordinary tone of the sacred writers. The writings of both the Old and New Testaments exhibit human affections, emotions, and motives.

1. The authors sometimes write and speak as feeble and limited beings. David, in his psalms, even in his prophetical and Messianic psalms, cries to God in anguish, and implores the Divine help for himself as a sufferer and a sinner. He asks for mercy and grace, prays for protection against his enemies, reviews past deliverances, and utters thanksgiving for victory.

We find similar experience in other Old Testament writers; and in the New Testament the strongly marked individuality of the apostle Paul will readily occur to the reader. Who so easily moved, so impassioned, so argumentative, and so logical as that hero of the Christian faith!

§ 142. INFLUENCE OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

We have said in Historical Hermeneutics that social, personal, and religious circumstances exert an influence upon the sacred writers.

We add here only three brief remarks relative to the impressions left upon the sacred writings by the intellectual and moral character of the authors.

1. The four principal dogmatic writers of the New Testament—Peter, John, James, and Paul—present four different individualities of style, tendencies, and methods.

Nevertheless one can observe that the first three exhibit a real affinity with the form of the instructions of the Saviour, with whom they were associated. To be convinced of this, it is sufficient to recall the celestial hope and the impassioned transports of St. Peter, the spiritual and divine character of the words of St. John, and the brief and sententious severity of St. James.

In St. Paul there is nothing similar. He, as well as they, grasped the doctrines of the Master, but he did not learn them by conversing with Him upon earth. He was taught them by revelation (Gal. i. 12). Moreover his writings exhibit but little of the language and of the sentences of Christ; but they do recall the methods of the school in which he had been educated.

2. Our second remark applies only to the prophets of the Old Testament. The proofs given of the individuality of the sacred writers were less peremptory for the prophets than for the others. But this is not true of the influence of personal circumstances. How many differences there are between them, and differences which can be attributed only to the special intellectual and moral character of each. We appeal to all those who have carefully studied Isaiah, Hosea, Joel, and Amos, who were all contemporary. A still better illustration is furnished by Isaiah and Ezekiel, who were not contemporary, but both of high social position, both of brilliant imagination, full of pathos, and of high poetic talent.

3. Our third remark has already been indicated in § 130. It is the contrast between the grandeur, the sublimity of the thought, and sometimes the feebleness and obscurity of the expression. This contrast furnished us there with a proof of inspiration; here it furnishes us with one of individuality.

§ 143. PROMINENT DIVERSITIES AMONG THE SACRED WRITERS.

No contradictions exist between them, and the differences in their recitals are reconcilable; yet these differences in the order, in the details, and in the color of their recitals, demonstrate the individuality of the authors.

1. These differences are perhaps best illustrated in the Gospels. In these our Saviour is depicted under four different phases. There is no moral contradiction. We see only the different rays of the same sun. The Christian who desires to be warmed by its light has only to produce the critical prism which refracts the rays, and to labor to reunite them in the practice of life, of love, and of faith. He will thus be certain to experience its power, and will be enlightened and cheered by the holy and brilliant light which results from their combination.

Each of these four evangelists has brought into more or less prominence special elements of the character of the God-man. Matthew exhibits His disinterestedness and His severe sanctity; Mark His active life; Luke represents Him as the Saviour of sinful and lost men; and John, as the Son in communion with the Father, calling men to eternal life by similar communion with Himself and with God.

2. We see also diversities in dogmatic tendencies. We refer to the formal, though not real, differences between St. Paul and St. James. Take, for example, the manner in which they formulate the conditions of salvation. St. Paul collects them all in justification by faith, and thus gives them an expression remarkably profound and philosophic. St. James places them in the works which accompany faith, and which bear testimony to the submis-

sion of the heart to the royal law of liberty. This expression amounts to the same thing in practice. It has the advantage of being more applicable, the inconvenience of being less simple and of leading to mistakes.

§ 144. DECLARATIONS OF THE SACRED WRITERS.

Not only do inspired men and the sacred writers allow their individuality to appear everywhere; but they declare and avow it. We will refer to four positive passages, the last of which has been already indicated in § 139, page 246.

1. The first passage is St. John iii. 31, in which we have the humble words of John the Baptist, when speaking of himself in contrast with the Saviour. Nevertheless this holy forerunner, who speaks in such humble terms of himself, was, according to Christ (Luke vii. 26), more than a prophet.

2. The second passage is 1 Cor. xiv. 32. The apostle says the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

3. In 2 Cor. xi. 6 St. Paul acknowledges that his speech or expression is not up to the level of the thought.

4. The fourth passage is 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. This passage is singularly important and decisive.

The prophets of the Old Testament endeavored to elucidate that which was obscure. They labored to understand, in advance, the sufferings of Christ and the glory which should follow. They labored to understand the epoch and the time (ποιον καιρον), an element which their inspiration did not make known to them.

The individuality of the sacred writers is, we think, abundantly demonstrated.

Chapter Second.

The Relation of Inspiration to the Individuality of the Sacred Writers.

§ 145. Two Elements and Two Factors in the Bible.

It is evident from the proofs which have been given of the inspiration and individuality of the sacred writers (§§ 128–143) that the Bible contains two elements — a divine and a human. These writers expressly assert that the Holy Spirit spake by them (Matt. x. 20; Acts ii. 4; 2 Pet. i. 21); that their writings had the character of infallible truth, and possessed absolute authority (John x. 35; Luke xvi. 29, 31; John v. 39; Matt. v. 17, 18); that as prophets and apostles they spoke and acted for God, and that what He said they said (Matt. xxii. 43; comp. Ps. xcv. 7–11 and Heb. iii. 7–11; comp. Heb. x. 15–17 and Jer. xxxi. 31–34; comp. Acts xxviii. 25–27 and Is. vi. 9, 10).

At the same time they assert as expressly that they spoke and wrote as independent writers. Instead of the formula, "Thus saith the Lord," we read, "the prophet Isaiah saith," etc. (John xii. 38, 39, 41; Rom. ix. 27, 29; x. 16, 20; Matt. ii. 17; Gal. v. 2; Gal. vi. 11; John vii. 23; Acts ii. 25).

The individuality of the sacred writers and the human element of the Bible are evident, as we have seen, from the human features impressed upon the whole frame and style of the Scriptures. Each author has his own manner of expressing his thoughts. When we read Isaiah, we say this is not the style of Jeremiah or of Ezekiel; and when we read John, we say this is not the style of Paul.

These facts prove the existence of two factors, whose mysterious union and co-operation produced the Holy Scriptures, in the form, style, and manner which Infinite Wisdom knew to be most suitable to the mind and heart of man. These two factors are the Holy Spirit and the minds of the sacred writers. The question arises: What is the relation of these two factors to one another? That question we will now endeavor to elucidate.

§ 146. INSPIRATION DID NOT DESTROY THE CONSCIOUS SELF-CONTROL OF THE SACRED WRITERS.

That inspiration did not destroy the conscious self-control of the sacred writers is evident from the fact that they preserved their individuality. "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets" (1 Cor. xiv. 32).

Inspired men were not, like the Pythoness of Delphi, thrown into a state of ecstasy, in which their understandings were held in abeyance, while they gave utterance to words of which they knew not the import. They did not speak in spite of themselves, as was the case, according to the belief of the heathen, with the utterers of oracles. The Bible, from its beginning to its end, bears evidence of their calm, constant self-control, and dispassionate judgment. They all spoke and wrote like men in the full possession of their faculties, and just as we would expect men of their rank and circumstances to speak and write. They spoke and wrote, it is true, under divine influence and guidance; but this was perfectly consistent with their conscious self-control; and their conscious self-control was perfectly consistent with supernatural direction. In the affairs of this life we often act under the conscious direction of others, while at the same time we feel that we have perfect control over

our own faculties, and experience no difficulties in the case. There is, therefore, no reason why any difficulty should be raised in the case of inspiration.

§ 147. THE TWO ELEMENTS—THE DIVINE AND THE HUMAN—ARE SO COMBINED AS TO PRODUCE ONE INDIVISIBLE RESULT.

The conclusion from the testimony and the facts of Scripture, which prove a two-fold authorship, is that the two agencies—the divine and the human—employed in its composition, are so combined as to produce one undivided and indivisible result. Notwithstanding the exercise of human agency in writing the Bible, it is all alike divine; and notwithstanding the divine agency employed in its composition, it is all alike human. The divine and human elements together constitute a theanthropic book.

§ 148. THE UNION OF THESE TWO ELEMENTS INEXPLICABLE.

How can the Holy Spirit operate upon the mind of man, without superseding the use of his faculties? How is the freedom of man compatible with the operation of the Holy Spirit? These are questions which we can not fully understand and explain. But it does not follow from the impossibility of our understanding and explaining them, that they are contradictory or incompatible. There are many things which we can not understand, or explain, which are not only possible, but actual facts, and which, upon sufficient evidence, we unhesitatingly believe. We accept the evidence in spite of the difficulty or mystery of the fact to be believed; and we do so, on the reasonable ground that difficulties, which are not impossibilities, and which may derive all

their plausibility and force from our own ignorance, amount to a very slight presumption against the truth of facts supported by abundant and reliable testimony. Such, we believe, is the testimony in the present instance.

§ 149. ANALOGIES ILLUSTRATING THE UNION OF THE DIVINE AND THE HUMAN ELEMENTS IN SCRIPTURE.

However inexplicable the union of the two elements in Scripture may be, it is not a fact that stands alone in the world.

1. It has an analogue in the person of Christ. The analogy between the Written Word and the Incarnate Word is sufficiently indicated in Scripture by the application of the same term to both. They are both called the Word of God, or simply the Word (John i. 1, 14; 1 Tim. iv. 2; James i. 22, 23; 1 Pet. ii. 2; Is. xl. 8; Luke viii. 11; Rom. x. 17; 2 Cor. iv. 2; Eph. vi. 17; Heb. iv. 12; vi. 5; 1 Pet. i. 23; Rev. xix. 13).

The limits and extent of this analogy lie within the confines of a mystery which the human intellect can not unveil. Yet the facts are sufficiently numerous to show that the analogy is real and not fanciful. The fullness of the Godhead and the perfection of humanity dwelt in Jesus Christ; at the same time His human nature was subject to the limitations of that nature. It was subject to the laws of humanity. He was a child and grew up to manhood. "He increased in wisdom" (Luke ii. 52). He suffered hunger and thirst, weariness of body and sorrow of mind. In these things we see the weakness of humanity. He raised the dead; He calmed the fury of the waves by a word; He rose from the grave and ascended into heaven. In these acts we see divine power. In the person of Christ we perceive

the co-existence of the Infinite and the finite, and their co-operation.

In a similar manner we observe in the sacred writers progress in knowledge, human limitation; but at the same time they furnish evidence of supernatural knowledge. The phenomena of their writings can not be explained except on the hypothesis of a divine power co-operating with them, or working in them, in such a way as to produce a book at once human and divine.

2. The gracious agency of the Holy Spirit upon the mind and heart of the Christian furnishes another analogue illustrative of the twofold agency in the authorship of the Holy Scriptures. Regeneration, conversion, and sanctification are ascribed to the Holy Spirit. He works in our hearts in harmony with our own free will. We are not conscious of force or violence. We act freely, so freely that the work of sanctification is sometimes spoken of in Scripture as our own. We are commanded to convert ourselves, to be holy, to make to ourselves a new heart, while, at the same time, we are told that it is God who worketh in us "both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. ii. 13).

3. The providence of God, both in nature and in history, furnishes another illustration of the point in hand. God is present in all nature, "upholding all things by the word of his power" (Heb. i. 3). He has established the laws of nature; and yet, in many instances, human agency is necessary to carry these laws into effect for the accomplishment of special ends. Without the appointments of God, in these instances, human instrumentality could effect nothing; and without human agency the Divine appointments, or laws of nature, would be equally inefficient. The two co-operate without any interference of the one with the other. The divine and the human agencies meet and conspire to the same end.

We observe the same thing in history. Take the case of Joseph, who was sold by his brethren and carried into Egypt. They acted freely; yet Joseph told them afterward that while they "thought evil against" him, yet "God meant it unto good, to bring to pass to save much people alive." In this instance the purpose of God was unknown to Joseph's brethren, and their purpose was antagonistic to God's. They were unconsciously controlled by God, and yet acted with perfect freedom. They acted in accordance with human motives. If the human and divine can co-operate, in such cases, without the suspension of man's free agency, why can they not co-operate when these two agencies are in accord, as was the case with the sacred writers, who wrote under the conscious guidance of the Holy Spirit?

4. Other analogues are furnished by the co-operation of the minds of teacher and pupil, in the solution of problems, in which the former directs the latter; and by the controlling influence which a superior mind has over another, that feels this controlling influence, yet acts with perfect freedom. In the former instance, the teacher may be said to solve the problem, and the pupil may be said to solve it. In the latter, the controlling mind may be said to accomplish a certain act; and the person acting under his control may be said to accomplish the same act.*

The foregoing analogies do not explain the mode of co-operation of the divine and the human agencies in the production of the Holy Scriptures; but they show that inspiration does not interfere with the freedom of the sacred writer. The Holy Spirit controls and directs, while the human agent retains his freedom and individuality.

* See "Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures," by Charles Elliott, D.D. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. 1877. Part III., chap. iv.

SECOND QUESTION: Did inspiration exclude occasionality from the sacred writings?

CHAPTER FIRST.—FACTS.

§ 150. GENERAL FACTS.

Facts prove that the Scriptures are not exempt from an occasional character, as we have intimated in § 136.

We will premise some general considerations:

1. We pursue here the same line of argument as in the case of the individuality of the sacred writers (§§ 137–144). In Historical Hermeneutics, when illustrating the influence of the times, of the occasion, and of the persons addressed upon the sacred writings, we supported our position in respect to that influence by numerous facts (§§ 87–89). These facts fall in so well with the theory of occasionality, and furnish so high a degree of evidence, as to prove it at least indirectly. By occasionality, we mean the influence which the occasion, the times, and the persons addressed exercised upon the sacred writings; and this influence was perfectly compatible with their inspiration.

2. The Bible was given to the world under a form which was neither codified nor complete at once, but "at sundry times and in divers manners," and consequently occasional. There must, indeed, have been a special motive for the successive appearance of each of the sacred books, which do not form otherwise a necessary series, and do not enter into an exterior and apparent plan. Each book, therefore, must have had its special object, its peculiar relation to its own time, an occasion in the circumstances of the persons addressed. This is what has been defined to be the occasionality of a book. Without a recognition of this the form of the Bible would be inexplicable.

3. Prof. Cellérier is of the opinion that some of the sacred books, at least some of the writings of inspired authors, were of such an occasional character that they have not been preserved; and adduces as a proof, 1 Cor. v. 9. On this passage, Calvin remarks in his commentary: "The epistle of which he speaks is not at this day extant. Nor is there any doubt that many others are lost. It is enough, however, that those have been preserved to us which the Lord foresaw would suffice." "This conclusion is perfectly consistent," says Wordsworth, "with the position that '*No Canonical book of Holy Scripture has been lost.*' For what is meant by the word '*Canonical*'? That which forms a part of those writings which constitute the *Κανὼν* or *Rule* of Faith of the Church, and has been *received* as such by the *Universal Church*, which is the body of Christ, and to which He promised His presence and that of the Holy Ghost." In respect to the whole matter, it may be safe to remark that we have no evidence that the collectors of the Canon were infallible; at the same time we have no evidence that any inspired writing intended for the whole body of the Church, at any period of its history, has been lost. Writings by inspired men have doubtless been lost; but they were probably of a local and temporary character.

§ 151. SPECIAL FACTS.

Several books of the Bible, and these not the least important, were written under a form essentially occasional, and stripped of their occasionality they would become unintelligible. What is a biblical epistle but a letter of instruction, addressed at a certain time to certain men, placed in certain circumstances, for the purpose of producing upon them a certain effect? After

having read the Epistle to the Galatians, and the Epistles to the Corinthians, can one have any doubt of their occasionality? What we say of Paul's Epistles may be said of many other books of the Bible.

2. Several books carry the impress of occasionality in the teaching which they contain. Take, for example, the Pentateuch and the two Epistles to the Corinthians, already mentioned. These writings, as well as many others, were addressed primarily to men of the times when they were written. While containing instruction adapted to men of all times and in every condition of life, they had also a special, urgent, evident, and temporary object. This special object occupies the foreground; in the background we discover the general object, which survives through all time.

Peter said to Jesus Christ (Luke xii. 41), "Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?" Indeed, the habitual teaching of Jesus Christ bears the impress of occasionality, without which it would have had very little effect upon His contemporaries.

3. All the books which have nothing decidedly occasional in their form, or in their teaching, present the same union of a general and universal object with an object, or at least with the details, of a contemporary nature, and consequently transient. This is an evident proof of occasionality. Even in books the most instructive and the most important, even in the richest portions of the Word of God, there is a contrast between the universal, eternal, and divine doctrine, and the occasional and temporary character of the reasonings, deductions, figures, and clothing of the ideas. They are like ancient letters addressed to others; but letters from which we can derive great profit to ourselves, and which we may, by dropping the address and salutations, consider as addressed to us. They are letters full of truths

and counsels of the highest utility, and intended from the first by their writers to be preserved for us and for future generations.

Chapter Second.

ELUCIDATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES.

§ 152. INTENTION AND METHOD OF REVELATION.

Before we deduce the hermeneutical consequences from the fact of occasionality, considered in the two previous sections, we must notice the light which it sheds upon the general method of revelation, and consequently upon the subject of Biblical Apologetics.

1. *General Method of Revelation.*—All the parts of the Bible, we have said, present the union of an occasional with a universal object, but in very different proportions. The Old Testament is much more occasional than the New. It is not only so in its details, but also when taken as a whole. The New Testament is so only in its details. The whole is designed for us fully as much as, or even more than, for the contemporaries of its writers; but its details and its forms were particularly adapted to them.

In the entire Bible, that which concerns us is its full revelation of salvation. It contains the history, and describes the nature and the conditions of that salvation; the origin and destination of man; the counsels of God.

Such are the form and the method of the Bible.

As a result of this, the Christian is constrained to activity of mind. It is only by a sustained intellectual activity that he can receive and apply the revelation contained in the Bible to himself. This activity, how-

ever, will be of a different nature in the common believer and in the theologian who is called to instruct others. The ordinary Christian studies the Bible for himself, not for others. Concerned chiefly about his own salvation, he will seek for those things which will influence his thoughts, his affections, and his will, and furnish nourishment for his faith. If he is wise, he will pass over things which are obscure to his mind, yet but partially enlightened; that is, over things which were the most occasional. He will dwell upon that which he comprehends, upon what he feels, upon what furnishes him with edification, peace, and light, namely, upon what was particularly designed for him. He is active, yea, very active in his work, for he is attentive. He neither analyzes nor discusses; he leaves what is occasional to theologians, and, like the bee gathering honey, he seeks everywhere in the Bible his special food. In each narrative, in each doctrine, in each sentence, he gathers something, and appropriates and assimilates that which is essential to himself. He thus receives a general impression of the Holy Scriptures, and finds that happy and salutary combination of knowledge and motives which they everywhere present. Dwelling upon that which especially arrests his attention, the ordinary Christian, of whom we speak, will seize upon that which is most in harmony with his intellectual and moral idiosyncrasy.

Hence result in different individuals, equally pious and sincere, different impressions of, and marked tendencies toward, such and such a phase of revealed truth. From this cause arises a variety of doctrines in the Church. We can account, in the same way, for the mysterious power of the Bible upon the most distinct individualities. It can shed its light upon every variety of character, and cause its penetrating influence to be

felt in minds differently situated, and even in apparent opposition.

It is different with the theologian who is called to teach. In his character, as a Christian, he must, without doubt, first of all, use the Bible for his own spiritual good. But the fact that he is charged with the duty of teaching others renders it impossible for him to set aside that which is obscure and occasional. He can not limit himself to receiving and giving a combined impression. He must explain all the difficulties, unveil all obscurities, and bring out the truth in its full light. He must proceed by analysis and end by synthesis. God, doubtless, could have given another form to the Bible and another law to revelation, but He has not done it; we must, therefore, accept with confidence and docility what He has given to us. In this work, as in every other, it is His will that man should employ his activity. It is His will that we should procure by labor the aliment of the mind as well as that of the body, and that we should be responsible in the one case as well as in the other.

Every one will understand, without its being necessary to insist upon them here, the important consequences which this point of view and the theory of occasionality, with which it is connected, have upon Apologetics. It furnishes a complete answer to two classes of objections—those which relate to the form of the Bible, without apparent order and without method, and those which are founded upon many obscure details — facts intended for others and not for us, *i. e.*, details and facts having the character of occasionality.

B. HERMENEUTICAL CONSEQUENCES.

§ 153. RELATIVE CHARACTER OF CERTAIN PORTIONS OF THE BIBLE.

Since the Bible was written "at sundry times" and on different occasions, it must sometimes have a relative character. In other words, portions of it must be relative to certain men and to certain times. Many of its details, of its forms of instruction, of its reasonings, and even of its institutions, must necessarily be occasional, that is, relative.

As a whole, it has, without doubt, a general utility for the human family. But very often this utility, especially in the Old Testament, will be that of documents to consult, of history to read, and not that of direct precepts to be received, nor of institutions to be preserved. It is important to observe this in practice. It is strange that it has been so often forgotten.

This consequence results in the most precise and incontestable manner from the principle of occasionality, also from the Sacred History, from the local nature of the Mosaic institutions, from their abrogation in the New Testament, from certain declarations which accompany certain commandments, and from the manner in which they were understood and accepted by inspired men themselves. In fact, we find in the Bible precepts relative to each dispensation.

§ 154. NECESSARY REUNION OF THE DIFFERENT BIBLICAL ELEMENTS.

All the portions of the Bible, even those which are most evidently occasional and local, have, as we have said, a real utility for the whole human family, at least a

utility historical and mediate. It results from this, that it is the duty of the religious teacher and of the ordinary Christian not to isolate any of the elements, but to combine them. It is the whole combined that we must study, observing the adaptation of its various parts to the different dispensations of the Church and to the human race in general, and thus acquiring a clear view of its completeness as a revelation intended for men in every age and in every country. To exclude voluntarily from our studies and from our means of edification any portions of the Bible, would be to proceed against the will of God, and to substitute in place of the whole volume which God has given us, another of our own choice. Christians, while they receive both the Old and the New Testaments as inspired and of divine authority, should place the New Testament upon a plane higher than that of the Old Testament. They should remember that both reveal the same plan of grace, that, notwithstanding the fuller and clearer revelation of the New Testament, the Old is of great historical importance, that it reveals very fully and clearly the plans and perfections of God, that it contains Messianic prophecies, some of which are remarkably adapted to strengthen our faith, that some parts of it are of the highest interest and utility, *e. g.*, the Mosaic Legislation; that it guides our faith and thoughts to the New, and furnishes us in the Psalms rich aliment for our spiritual nature.

It is equally obligatory upon Christians to study the New Testament as a whole, and in its connection with the Old, and not to confine themselves to some isolated portions.

Too often, in the interest of party zeal, some have attempted to disunite the sacred volume. They have confined themselves, and advised others to do the same, to the reading of St. Paul's Epistles, sometimes to the

Epistle to the Romans alone, sometimes to the writings of St. John, sometimes to the Evangelists; and sometimes in the Evangelists, to the discourses of Jesus Christ, separated from His miracles and history. There are men who seem to concentrate the whole of revelation in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians and in the Apocalypse. All this is wrong, pernicious to faith, and destructive of true piety.

THIRD QUESTION: Does inspiration exclude all accommodation?

CHAPTER FIRST.

STATE OF THE QUESTION.

§ 155. DISTINCTION—DEFINITION.

There is a false accommodation, and there is a true accommodation. The former relates to the *matter;* the latter has respect to the *form.* The former holds that Christ and His apostles accommodated themselves to the modes of thought and contemplation around them, in such a manner as to admit error into their instructions in respect to the interpretation of Scripture, or in respect to forms of opinion and articles of belief; the latter, that they fell in with prevalent modes of thought or forms of conception, so as not to lend countenance to error, but to serve for the better apprehension of the truth. The former is incompatible with inspired wisdom; the latter is compatible with it. It is an act of condescension on the part of God, by which, in His wisdom and goodness, He adapts revelation to human capacity, in order that it may be understood and rendered effectual for our salvation. This definition contains the statement of a fact and of an object, which are indis-

solubly united. The fact is the form, more or less exact, more or less complete, given to revelation. The object is to enable man to understand it and accept it. Take away the one or the other, and there is no such thing as accommodation.

The most natural and the most appropriate illustration of accommodation, on the part of God, is furnished by a parent in the instruction of his child. Every pious and sensible father, when teaching his child the knowledge of God, uses language adapted to his capacity, and studiously avoids expressions philosophically exact. In the same way God chooses the ideas and the language best adapted to convey revealed truth to the mind of man. This is all that is meant by accommodation, which we find in the expression, in the occasion, in gradual revelation, in limitation, in the time, or in the mode of teaching; for in these various respects the divine wisdom may require that God should accommodate Himself to human weakness, in order to attain the object of revelation.

It follows from this statement of the matter that occasionality, notwithstanding its peculiar character, is included under accommodation as a species under a genus. We treated of it separately, on account of its frequency, and of the specialty of its applications. But here we proceed from the species to the genus, from the special case to the general law, which must necessarily be examined in its whole extent.

The term accommodation, as employed by some, has given rise to well-grounded objections; but as we use it, no reasonable objection can be made to it. The question respecting it may be stated thus:

In the manner of conveying revelation to man, was any concession made to the limitation of his faculties,

for the purpose of securing the influence of that revelation upon him?

This question is perfectly legitimate, and the answer to it must be derived from the facts of Scripture.

Chapter Second.

NECESSITY OF ACCOMMODATION.

§ 156. GENERAL NECESSITY.

We may affirm, *a priori*, the necessity of accommodation in revelation. The necessity arises from the definition already given of the object of revelation, which is to give to man such knowledge of God as is necessary to his regeneration and salvation. But in order to this, the Infinite must condescend to adapt it to the understanding of the finite. Consequently, it is not the truth as it exists in its fullness and exactness in the Divine mind, that God imparts to the human mind, but intelligible, saving truth, truth proportionate to our faculties and our needs, truth clothed in a form fitted to bring it within the grasp of the understanding. The employment of human language is an incontestable accommodation, for language made to express human ideas is necessarily incapable of rendering exactly the infinite nature and counsels of God.

But it is not only in the use of human language that accommodation consists. We find it also in the choice of popular words, in the use of striking figures, in the preference given to elementary teaching, in arguments *ad hominem*, which are more convincing to contemporaries than those which are rigorously logical, in the gradual progress observed in the revelation of certain doc-

trines, and finally in the temporary toleration of certain practices, which revelation was intended, but required time to eradicate.

§ 157. SPECIAL NECESSITY.

The necessity of accommodation will appear still stronger if we consider the people to whom revelation was, at first, more directly addressed. Compare §§ 73, 74.

1. It was addressed principally to the ignorant masses, to the poor and despised ones of the world, who have always formed the great majority of the human family. Among them are found the most urgent wants, the most numerous miseries, the most ignorant minds, and consequently among them accommodation is the more necessary. Can any one suppose that God would sacrifice these ignorant, despised, and groaning masses to a logical and philosophical rigor of statement in the doctrines and form of revelation?

2. In the second place, revelation was addressed partially to the Hebrew people—a people not addicted to metaphysical speculation and philosophical deduction. This people were chosen to prepare the way for Christianity; but few of them received it. The revelation which was given to them in the meantime was for them, adapted to their spiritual wants, and on a level with their capacity. It was necessarily, therefore, provisional and incomplete; in other words, it was a divine accommodation (Heb. viii. 7–13).

3. Christianity itself, the perfect revelation, and intended for all, was addressed first to the Jews, the descendants of the Hebrews. These Jews, in the time of our Saviour, were in advance of their ancestors; but they were nevertheless far behind the Greeks in abstract thought, in logical processes, and in philosophical investi-

gation. Their intellectual tendency manifested itself in subtleties, in ardor of imagination, passion, and curiosity. The methods of reasoning which were most effectual among them, consisted in appeals to the authority of the Old Testament, and in concrete statements of the truth. Hence the necessity of having recourse, among them, to citations, to figures, and parables.

4. A little later, Christianity was preached among the heathen nations. Among them accommodation was less generally necessary, because their multiplicity of gods and their flexibility of intellect rendered them more capable of modifying their ideas and their beliefs. At the same time, accommodation, among them, was more dangerous, because pagan ideas led away from Christianity, instead of preparing for it, as did Jewish ideas. Nevertheless, some accommodation was necessary among the heathen ; facts, at least, prove that it was used. St. Paul and St. John sometimes expressed Christian ideas in terms derived from the language of Oriental philosophy.

5. We remark, finally, that Revelation, in consequence of its very object, must address itself more to the sensibility and the imagination of men than to their intellect and their logical faculty. Compare § 74. In fact, it was not intended to elaborate a system of theology, but to kindle a new life in the heart. It is upon the will that it essentially acts ; it is by love that it regenerates humanity. Such an object supposes accommodation, or rather it is itself an accommodation. It necessitates the adaptation of revealed doctrines and the teaching of them to the heart, the faculties, the wants, and miseries of man.

Chapter Third.

FACTS OF SCRIPTURE.

§ 158. GENERAL STATEMENT.

We have shown the necessity of accommodation. We come now to the examination of facts. These facts we will arrange under two heads: (1). Accommodation pertaining to the general plan of Revelation; (2). Accommodation in the discourses of Jesus Christ and in the writings of His Apostles.

A. ACCOMMODATION PERTAINING TO THE GENERAL PLAN OF REVELATION.

§ 159. ACCOMMODATION OF FORMS.

Every deviation from strict philosophical truth is an accommodation. All the anthropomorphisms of Scripture and all its figures are accommodations of form; and we have no need of proving again that the Bible is full of them. They can not be said to belong solely to the individuality of the writers, but to the intention of God, who chose these writers and respected their individuality. They are linked, therefore, to the general plan of Revelation.

As small accommodations prove as much as great ones, and are sometimes more striking and less contested; and as a single case is sufficient for illustration, we will cite for that purpose the words "before me" [literally, "before my face"] in the Decalogue. These words add much force and solemnity to the first of the ten commandments, which were "written by the finger of God" upon the two tables of stone (Ex. xxxi. 18). But

they evidently form an anthropomorphic expression well fitted to convey a truth to the mind and a sentiment to the heart.

Accommodations of form, in the Old Testament, are clearly affirmed in Hab. vi. 13–18. The sacred author teaches us, in that passage, that the oath which God made to Abraham was an accommodation to human usages. This oath, relatively to God, was merely a strong asseveration, for He could not swear by any one greater than Himself. Its whole force and solemnity belonged to the paternal condescension of which it was the pledge, that is, to accommodation.

§ 160. ACCOMMODATION OF MATTER—OLD TESTAMENT.

The accommodation which now occupies our attention, pertains to doctrine and morals. It could not belong to the individuality of the sacred writers, but to the nature and the extent of the knowledge which they received.

Let us first notice moral accommodation. Jesus Christ teaches us in a very distinct manner, that moral accommodation was allowed in the Law of Moses; in other words, that his Law forbore a perfection of discipline. "Moses," says the Saviour, "because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so" (Matt. xix. 8).

We now pass to accommodation in doctrine.

In the Pentateuch God is represented as occupying a particular place in space, and as marching at the head of the Hebrew people (Ex. xxxiii. 3, 5, 12–17).

The burning bush, the pillar of cloud, the thunders of Sinai, the divine glory seen on the mountain, symbolize the Divine presence, by attaching to it the ideas of flame

and light (Ex. iii. 2; xiii. 21; xix. 16; xxiv. 10). Animal sacrifices were thought to expiate sins. External and ceremonial observances were prescribed as assuring and meriting the protection of Jehovah (Deut. xxvi. 12–15).

If we pass from the Pentateuch to the Prophets, we will find in them numerous instances of accommodation, which might be ranged under those which pertain only to the form. We refer to the terrestrial images, under which the advent of Christ and salvation by Him were announced. Take, for example, in Isaiah, the exaltation of Jerusalem over the nations, and the eagerness of those nations to go up to her to worship Jehovah (Is. ii. 2, 3; xi. 10–16; xlix. 18–23); the material images of the effects of Christian piety (Is. xi. 6–9; xxxii. 16; lxv. 19–25); the triumphs of the Messiah, etc. (Is. xlii. 13–17).

The same images are found in the other prophets. Upon this and the preceding section, compare § 119.

§ 161. SAME CONTINUED—NEW TESTAMENT.

Is there in the New Testament any accommodation of doctrine? In other terms, are there in the general plan of Christian revelation any doctrines incomplete which present revealed truth under an imperfect point of view, modified by and blended with the religious ideas of the time in which it was written? Are the doctrines of the New Testament intended to appear to us at some time, in heaven for example, as inadequate expressions of the plans of God, but at the same time the best adapted to give us in this world an idea of these plans? Are they meant to lead us, not like the Law, to Christ by Moses, but to the Father and to heaven by Christ?

These questions are put by Prof. Cellérier, and require an answer.

If by accommodation, in this connection, is meant that Christ and His apostles accommodated themselves to the ignorance and prejudices of the Jews, we reject it as derogatory to the character of our Lord, and to that of the sacred writers of the New Testament. Infidelity itself has not impeached the rectitude and purity of the Saviour. His life has always been reckoned the embodiment of absolute perfection. No one, after a careful perusal of the New Testament, can point to any compromise between truth and error.

In regard to the question, "Whether the doctrines of the New Testament are intended to appear to us, at some time, in heaven for example, as inadequate expressions of the plans of God, while they are the best adapted to give us in this world an idea of these plans, we are not competent to speak. It is not for us to say what may be done in heaven; but the Scriptures contain no intimation that a revelation supplementary to the New Testament will be given to us in our present state of existence. The Old Testament teaches its own inchoate character, and points us to the present economy as one more perfect, inasmuch as it enjoys a fuller revelation; and the New Testament refers to the institutions of the Old Testament as the rudiments of the Christian dispensation, as a "shadow of good things to come" (Gal. iv. 3–9; Heb. x. 1). The New Testament revelation is, therefore, supplementary to the Old, or rather, it is the unfolding of it; it is perfect and final so far as it pertains to this world.

If accommodation refers to the mode of argumentation, the form of teaching, or the manner in which doctrines were propounded by Christ and His apostles to suit the tastes and faculties of their hearers, then many

instances of it occur in the New Testament. The use of parables, proverbs, and allegories was a prudent adaptation to the state of knowledge among the people, just as every wise instructor suits his lessons to the capacities of his hearers, by giving milk to babes and strong meat to full-grown men. This discreet method of instruction was observed by Christ and His apostles. Hence we see a progressive system of teaching in the New Testament, marked by distinct stages.*

§ 162. ACCOMMODATIONS IN THE DISCOURSES OF JESUS CHRIST, AND IN THOSE OF HIS APOSTLES.

We pass from the general discussion of accommodation in the New Testament, to the discourses of Jesus Christ. Do we find, in His teaching, any accommodations to the circumstances of locality, time, and persons?

The language of Christ is almost constantly marked by local colors, and clothed in contemporary forms, which can be regarded only as accommodations necessary to make His discourses understood by His immediate auditors.

We will give some instances, the number of which might be indefinitely increased.

Christ says, in Matt. viii. 11, "I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."

In Matt. xxvi. 29, we read that He said to His disciples, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I shall drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." This passage is repeated in

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* "Davidson's Sacred Hermeneutics," p. 200. Edinburgh: Thomas Clark, 1843.—Bernard's Bampton Lectures. Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1867.

Luke xxii. 18, and in Mark xiv. 25. In the last instance, it is preceded by the solemn formula, "verily." In these quotations, there is evident allusion to the social entertainments of this world; and the language pertaining to these is employed to represent the social condition of the kingdom of heaven.

As an instance of accommodation on the part of the apostles, see 1 Cor. ix. 19–22.

It is unnecessary to enumerate any more examples. They abound in all the Saviour's teachings, and are found in all the writings of the New Testament. To interpret them requires a knowledge of the manners and customs of the times. An acquaintance with sacred geography, chronology, and history is also requisite to understand accommodations to the circumstances of locality and time.

§ 163. CONCLUDING REMARKS.

We hold the doctrine of plenary inspiration, and believe that all the facts of Scripture are consistent with it. Objections to this doctrine have been founded on the individuality of the sacred writers. The expression of their personal feelings, experience, and beliefs; the variety of conception and expression in their statements of the same truths, and in their narratives of the same events, have been appealed to as proofs that they were not plenarily inspired. Their individuality has been admitted. It has been admitted that the Scriptures are of human authorship, and, at the same time, of divine authorship. Two factors—the Holy Spirit and the sacred writers—co-operated in their production; and the result was an infallible book (§§ 145–149). The union of these two factors is acknowledged to be a mystery, but not an impossibility, as the illustrative facts, adduced

in those sections, clearly show. The human element was no less human, because it wrought with the divine; and the divine element was no less divine, because it wrought with the human. The Scriptures afford evidence of the perfection and harmonious working of both.

If the individuality of the sacred writers is consistent with plenary inspiration, it is not difficult to see how occasionality, or the individuality of circumstances—as occasion, time, place, and persons addressed—can be so. These limitations would merely affect the range and object of inspiration, not its nature. They are as compatible with that as the wider limitations of earth and time.

Some have taught, as has been stated (§ 155), that our Lord and the sacred writers spoke and wrote occasionally, according to the prevailing opinions of the times, and not according to the truth of things. Such an accommodation we reject as inconsistent with our views of inspiration, and with the facts of Scripture rightly understood. But an accommodation which has respect to the form merely of the doctrines, or lessons taught, we hold to be admissible and even necessary. It is required by our mental and moral constitution. Revelation and inspiration would be impossible without it.

The natural deficiencies of the sacred writers are consistent with the doctrine of plenary inspiration. Some of them were deficient in education, in literary capacity, in intellectual endowments, and in refinement. These things had nothing to do with inspiration. They belonged to the sacred writers as men; and when they received the divine commission to write, it was not necessary to endow them with the taste and to adorn them with the classic elegance of Sophocles and Plato. Inspiration did not change a single faculty of the mind; neither did it supply information on any subject beyond its range; that was the province of revelation. It did not make

grammarians, rhetoricians, nor logicians. In these things it left the man as it found him. Had this been kept in mind, the extremes of the Hebraists and Purists would have been avoided. The Scriptures would not have been represented, on the one hand, as abounding in Hebrew idioms and constructions, and in solecisms; nor, on the other hand, as models of classic excellence, and standards of literary taste.

Statements in the Bible which do not come from God, and which are not sanctioned by His authority, are consistent with plenary inspiration. The sacred writer merely records them; and the record, not the statements, is infallible. The inquiries with regard to such statements must always be: Who is the author of them? Does the sacred writer approve them? or does he merely record them as parts of a historical narrative? If the latter, they furnish no argument against his inspiration.

Quotations made by the writers of the New Testament from the Old have occasioned difficulty in the minds of many, in regard to the subject of plenary inspiration. Some of these quotations are taken literally from the Septuagint version, where it differs from the Hebrew; and some differ from both the original text and the Septuagint version, even where, according to our exegesis, the Hebrew text and the Greek translation correspond to each other. These difficulties rise out of the strictly verbal theory of inspiration, but vanish on the dynamical theory, which we adopt.

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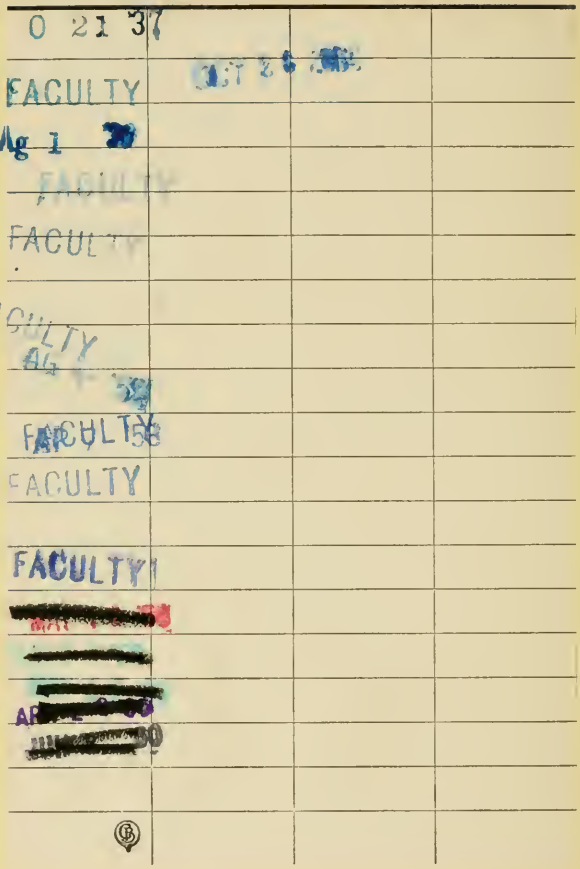
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